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“Miraculous and supernaturall effects” in the works of Henry More

Thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy: 2019

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I confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own work.

Clare Fitzpatrick

Abstract

Dr. Henry More [1614-1687], the prominent English theologian and philosopher, included hundreds of cases of “miraculous and supernaturall effects”, such as ghosts, witchcraft and divine intervention, throughout many of his works. Many historians of More have struggled to reconcile their admiration for his philosophy with their embarrassment at his engagement with ideas and cases concerning the supernatural. Therefore whilst the associated belief structures (especially witchcraft) have been examined by modern social and cultural historians, the experiences themselves, and the contemporary study of those experiences, have been relatively neglected.

This study will expand on earlier work by A. Rupert Hall, Allison Coudert and Robert Crocker to explore More’s use of such cases to explain the different metaphysical properties of God (miracles, prophecy and providence), the characteristics of the soul, angels, demons and witchcraft, and the Spirit of Nature (an intermediary spiritual principle that organises and animates matter). The cases represent a fascinating insight into beliefs and phenomenology. Human experience is a product of both culture and individual cognitive and perceptual processes and therefore I have integrated certain findings from anomalistic psychology into this interdisciplinary psycho-historical study to help bridge the gap between realism and relativism.

The anachronistic charges of credulity against More are challenged by assessing More’s beliefs in their contemporary context; his robust criticism of Catholic miracle claims and astrology demonstrate he *did* distinguish between different types of supernatural assertions. I have also identified how More struggled to balance his natural theology with the new science, the pitfalls of confirmation bias and pseudo-scientific reasoning, and how More’s own personal experiences contributed to his conviction in his personal belief framework and his acceptance of such a broad range of miraculous and supernatural effects.

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Abbreviations

Dates for later editions are provided in the notes as applicable.

AA	<i>An Antidote against Atheism</i> (1653)
AAI	<i>An appendix to the late antidote against idolatry</i> (1673)
AARJ	<i>Apocalypsis Apocalypseos; Or the Revelation of St John the Divine unveiled</i> (1680)
AHM	<i>The Apology of Dr. Henry More</i> (1664) [annexed to ME-MI]
AI	<i>An Antidote Against Idolatry</i> (1669) [annexed to ESESC]
AKJV	<i>Authorized King James Version of the Bible</i> (1611)
ASR	<i>An answer to several remarks upon Dr. Henry More, his expositions of the Apocalypse and Daniel, as also upon his Apology written by S.E. Mennonite, and published in English by the answerer ; whereunto are annexed two small pieces, Arithmetica apocalyptica, and Appendicula apocalyptica</i> (1684)
ATFT	<i>Annotations upon the two foregoing treatises, Lux orientalis, or, An enquiry into the opinion of the Eastern sages concerning the prae-existence of souls, and the Discourse of truth</i> (1682)
AV	<i>An account of virtue, or, Dr. Henry More's abridgment of morals</i> (1690) [English translation of EE 2 nd edition]
BDRP	<i>A brief discourse of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist</i> (1686)
BJHP	<i>British Journal for the History of Philosophy</i>
BR-AI	<i>A brief reply to a late answer to Dr. Henry More his Antidote against idolatry</i> (1672)
CC	<i>Conjectura cabbalistica</i> (1653)
CSPW	<i>A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings of Dr Henry More</i> (1662 or 1712 as stated)
DD	<i>Divine Dialogues containing sundry Disquisitions & Instructions concerning the Attributes of God and his Providence in the World</i> (1713) [English translation of DD-123 and DD-45 2 nd edition]
DD-123	<i>Divine Dialogues containing sundry Disquisitions & Instructions</i>

	<i>concerning the Attributes and Providence of God - The Three First Dialogues, treating of the Attributes of God, and his Providence at large</i> (1668)
DD-45	<i>The Two Last Dialogues, Treating of the Kingdome of God Within us and Without us, and of His special Providence through Christ over His Church from the Beginning to the End of all Things</i> (1668)
DH	<i>Divine Hymns</i> (1668) [annexed to DD-45]
DSM-5	<i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders</i> , 5th Edition (2013)
EE	<i>Enchiridion Ethicum</i> (1668)
EM	<i>Enchiridion Metaphysicum</i> (1671)
EPD	<i>A plain and continued exposition of the several prophecies or divine visions of the prophet Daniel</i> (1681)
ESESC	<i>An exposition of the seven epistles to the seven churches together with a brief discourse of idolatry, with application to the Church of Rome</i> (1669)
ET	<i>Enthusiasmus Triumphatus</i> (1656)
GMG	<i>An Explanation of the grand Mystery of Godliness</i> (1660)
IS	<i>The Immortality of the Soul</i> (1659)
ME-MI	<i>A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity – The First Part</i> (1664)
ME-SP	<i>A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity – Synopsis Prophetica, Or, The Second Part of the Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity</i> (1664)
OAT	<i>Observations upon Anthroposophia theomagica, and Anima magica abscondita</i> (1650)
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> (2018)
OO	<i>Henrici Mori Cantabrigiensis Opera Omnia</i> (1679)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OT	<i>H. Mori Cantabrigiensis Opera Theologica</i> (1675 or 1700 as stated)
PP (PS)	<i>Philosophicall Poems</i> (1649) ('The Præexistence of the Soul')
PP-SSD	<i>Paralipomena prophetica containing several supplements and defences of Dr Henry More his expositions of the Prophet Daniel and the apocalypse</i> (1685)
SCR	<i>Some cursory reflexions impartially made upon Mr. Richard Baxter his</i>

	<i>way of writing notes on the Apocalypse, and upon his advertisement and postscript (1685)</i>
SLA	<i>The second lash of Alazonomastix, laid on in mercie upon that stubborn youth Eugenius Philalethes: or a Sober Reply to a very uncivill Answer to certain Observations upon Anthroposophia Theomagica and Anima magica abscondita (1651)</i>
ST	<i>Saducismus Triumphatus (1681)</i>
TA	<i>Tetractys anti-astrologica, or, The four chapters in the explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness which contain a brief but solid Confutation of Judiciary Astrology (1681)</i>
TCUT	<i>Two choice and useful treatises the one, Lux orientalis, or, An enquiry into the opinion of the Eastern sages concerning the praeexistence of souls, being a key to unlock the grand mysteries of providence in relation to mans sin and misery : the other, A discourse of truth / by the late Reverend Dr. Rust ... ; with annotations on them both (1682)</i>

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

The prominent and respected English theologian and philosopher, Dr. Henry More [1614-1687], included hundreds of cases of “miraculous and supernaturall effects”, such as ghosts, witchcraft and divine intervention, throughout many of his works. His purpose was “for the proving that there are Spirits, that the Atheist thereby may the easier bee induced to believe there is a God”.¹ His natural theology—deriving theological proofs from observations of nature and reasoned argument rather than divine revelation—was broad as he also used the cases to explain the different metaphysical properties and powers of God, angels and demons, witches, human souls (before and after death) and the Spirit of Nature (an intermediary spiritual principle that organises and animates matter). Whilst the associated belief structures (especially witchcraft) have been examined by modern social and cultural historians, the experiences themselves, and the contemporary study of those experiences, have been relatively neglected. Many historians have struggled to understand how a serious intellectual such as More could have found these strange and extraordinary stories credible and worthy of study. Yet the cases he described represent a fascinating insight into beliefs and phenomenology as well as More’s metaphysics. What were these phenomena and what are the similarities and differences between contemporary and modern beliefs and experiences?

In particular, the social historian Keith Thomas has greatly broadened our understanding of the diverse aspects of early modern religious and supernatural beliefs in his epic and inspirational book, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. He found religious and supernatural beliefs too closely interrelated to be studied separately. These “magical beliefs” were “resilient” and “self-confirming” (the scientific term is ‘non-falsifiable’) and Thomas sees their popularity primarily as “explanations of misfortune”. His objective was “to make sense of some of the systems of belief which were current in sixteenth- and seventeenth- century England,

¹ Henry More, *An Antidote against Atheisme* (London: Roger Daniel, 1653), III.v p. 122 & ‘Preface’, sig. B2v.

but which no longer enjoy much recognition today. Astrology, witchcraft, magical healing, divination, ancient prophecies, ghosts and fairies, are now all rightly disdained by intelligent persons. But they were taken seriously by equally intelligent persons in the past, and it is the historian's business to explain why this was so.”²

Thomas's comments demonstrate the common misconception that belief in miraculous and supernatural phenomena has been in steady decline since the Enlightenment, and whilst advances in science and technology increasingly eliminate supernatural explanations from our objective reality, supernatural beliefs have actually held up quite well into the twenty-first century. Horoscopes are printed in national newspapers, spirit mediums sell out in theatres up and down the country, television documentaries follow ghost hunters and alien conspiracy theorists, 400 million books about a boy wizard have been sold across the world, and the majority of the biggest grossing films feature super-human or magical powers and/or aliens. Supernatural ideas are an integral part of modern culture, and not just for entertainment purposes. A 2007 Ipsos MORI poll reported 47% of British adults believed in life after death, 41% in telepathy, and 58% in premonitions. Of the 38% that believed in ghosts, 36% of them reported that they had seen one.³ A 2016 You Gov survey found that 54% of British people described themselves as belonging to a particular religion, and more people believed in ghosts than in a creator.⁴ What is going on? Is the half of the population that holds supernatural or religious beliefs just the 'unintelligent' half? No, people are more complicated than that. Whilst there is a correlation of supernatural or paranormal belief with intuitive cognitive style compared to analytical reasoning style, it is unrelated to intelligence per se.⁵ Psychological cross-cultural studies show that paranormal beliefs are generally higher in areas with lower standards of living, literacy, education levels and an

² Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1973), pp. 763, 767-9, 790. First published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson in 1971, however all page references in this thesis refer to the more widely available 1973 Penguin edition.

³ Ipsos MORI, *Survey on Beliefs*, (2007), [<https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/survey-beliefs>, last accessed 10th March 2018].

⁴ You Gov, *British people more likely to believe in ghosts than a Creator* (2016), [<https://yougov.co.uk/news/2016/03/26/o-we-of-little-faith/>, last accessed 10th March 2018].

⁵ For a summary of recent research, see for example: Christopher C. French & Anna Stone, *Anomalistic Psychology: Exploring Paranormal Belief and Experience* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 39-51, 115-18.

overall lower quality of life.⁶ In spite of Thomas's misleading assessment of modern rates of belief, these psychological studies endorse his general conclusion on the decline of magic as resulting from improvements in social factors: intellectual changes, new technology, and new aspirations. It also explains the continuity of belief among poorer rural communities where the quality and standards of life and education did not improve until more modern times.⁷

Historians can make use of psychology to investigate the history of human thought and behaviour. Interdisciplinary historians with the requisite skills and knowledge can analyse and understand their subject in context, as has Alan Macfarlane, who has doctorates in both History and Anthropology. Historians attempting interdisciplinary research must be wary of potential pitfalls, such as placing undue reliance on pseudoscience rather than valid science. For example, psychoanalysis is a theory of the unconscious mind developed by Sigmund Freud in the 1890s that has unverifiable claims and no scientific foundation and thus should be used with caution; although I acknowledge that psychoanalytic conjectures have been used to suggest some interesting directions for enquiry in the excellent historical research of John Demos and Lyndal Roper.⁸ Another hazard is to over-generalise from modern scientific findings and slip from proposing possible explanations to making over-simplifications and absolute claims for real effects in historical cases. This is a tendency evident in Edward Bever's work combining detailed historical research on the Württemberg witchcraft records with psychology, medicine and other scientific disciplines with the aim of identifying the basis in reality for early modern witchcraft beliefs.⁹ Similarly, specialists in other fields that attempt historical analysis can provide useful insights, but they can also make blunders through their lack of contextual knowledge. Thus the attempts by early psychiatrists to diagnose every

⁶ For a summary of recent research, see for example: French & Stone, *Anomalous Psychology*, pp. 33-5; Harvey J. Irwin, *The Psychology of Paranormal Belief*, (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2009), pp. 51-66.

⁷ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 767-800.

⁸ John P. Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982, 2004), 'Preface' & pp. 116-23, 197-206; Lyndal Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, sexuality and religion in early modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 1994), 'Introduction' & pp. 217-8, 227-31.

⁹ Edward Bever, *The Realities of Witchcraft and Popular Magic in Early Modern Europe: Culture, Cognition, and Everyday Life* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp. xiv-v. For out-of-body experiences and the confessions of flying witches, see pp. 124-9.

witch and demoniac in history as suffering some sort of mental illness was an inaccurate sweeping generalisation, sometimes even confusing the two groups.¹⁰ Art, literature and the social sciences are the natural collaborators of history and can be illuminating when used sensitively. With degrees in both psychology and history, I can therefore enhance my historical analysis through my awareness and careful use of anomalistic psychology.

Anomalistic psychology is the study of anomalous experiences and associated beliefs, such as apparitions, extra-sensory perception, psychokinesis, out-of-body experiences, etc. Today, many of these beliefs and experiences are colloquially termed ‘paranormal’ and ‘supernatural’, but these are loaded terms that inherently imply an unnatural causation. Therefore, modern psychologists use the acausal term ‘anomalous’ experience. This is “an uncommon experience (e.g. synaesthesia [where the stimulation of one sense, such as seeing a colour, automatically stimulates another sense, such as sound]), or one that, although it may be experienced by a significant number of persons (e.g., psi experiences), is believed to deviate from ordinary experience or from the usually accepted explanations of reality according to Western mainstream science.”¹¹ Anomalistic psychology studies all three elements of belief and experience: subjective reality (personal experience or phenomenology), objective reality (what actually happens) and intersubjective reality (shared beliefs e.g. religion). It demonstrates how the exact composition and degree of belief is uniquely personal, varying from person to person. It also demonstrates that anomalous experiences and associated beliefs have objective explanations and are part of human experience. My research will evaluate anomalous experiences and associated beliefs in England during the early modern period through an examination of More’s cases. I will analyse the components, exploring how they were understood both in the contemporary context and by modern theories, and assess whether there was there an equivalent contemporary concept of ‘paranormal’. I have included a

¹⁰ For an excellent if dated summary, see Nicholas P. Spanos, ‘Witchcraft in Histories of Psychiatry: A Critical Analysis and an Alternative Conceptualization’, *Psychological Bulletin*, 85:2 (1978), 417-39, pp. 417-20.

¹¹ Etzel Cardeña, Steven Jay Lynn and Stanley Krippner, ‘Introduction: Anomalous Experiences in Perspective’, in Etzel Cardeña, Steven Jay Lynn and Stanley Krippner, eds., *Varieties of Anomalous Experience: Examining the Scientific Evidence*, 2nd edition (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 2000, 2014), 3-20, p. 4.

few present-day examples and explanations, not for any reductionist or modernist purpose, but purely to enhance the awareness of the reader as to the transhistorical objective reality of equivalent extraordinary phenomena that exist within human psychology and the natural world. Strange phenomena do occur and they invite investigation and demand explanation both in the modern and early modern period. As Thomas Kuhn notes, the awareness of an anomaly, its exploration, and the adaption or revolution of the paradigm theory to explain and expect it, is exactly how scientific discovery and progress works.¹²

Scientific researchers (both sceptical anomalistic psychologists and pro-paranormal parapsychologists and psychical researchers) tend to write the ‘history of heroes’, following their own lineage back to its origins, thus producing a skewed history. Some comment on the prevalence of anomalistic experiences throughout human history by referencing accounts of magic and prophecy from ancient Egypt, Greece and the Bible.¹³ Some provide a brief review of the history of psychological interest in the subject and the founding of the Society for Psychical Research [SPR] in 1882.¹⁴ Some devote a few paragraphs to cover the centuries in between, but often ‘history’ starts with eighteenth-century Mesmerism and the rise of spiritualism with the Fox sisters in the United States of America in 1848.¹⁵ Some comment briefly on specific early modern anomalous experiences and associated beliefs, such as Cohn-Simmen’s paragraph on the work of Kirk, Fraser and Martin in the 1690s and 1700s as a background to her review of research on ‘second sight’.¹⁶ Even Edinburgh

¹² Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd edition (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1962, 1970, 1996), passim especially pp. 52-110.

¹³ Stuart A. Vyse, *Believing in Magic: The Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 6; Nicola J. Holt, Christine Simmonds-Moore, David Luke, Christopher C. French, *Anomalistic Psychology*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 1; Richard Wiseman, *Paranormality* (London: Macmillan, 2011), pp. 274-5.

¹⁴ For example: Cardeña et al, ‘Introduction’, p. 6; Hans J. Eysenck & Carl Sargent, *Explaining the Unexplained: Mysteries of the Paranormal*, 2nd edition (London: BCA, 1982, 1993), pp. 22-28; Holt et al, *Anomalistic Psychology*, p. 8; Robert M. Schoch and Logan Yonavjak, ‘Introduction: Taking the Paranormal Seriously’ in Robert M. Schoch and Logan Yonavjak, eds., *The Parapsychology Revolution: A Concise Anthology of Paranormal and Psychical Research* (New York: Penguin Group, 2008), pp. 15-6;

¹⁵ Harvey J. Irwin, *An Introduction to Parapsychology*, 3rd edition (London: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1999), pp. 13-8; Alan Gauld, *The Founders of Psychical Research* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968).

¹⁶ Shari A. Cohen-Simmen, ‘Second Sight’ in Jane Henry, ed., *Parapsychology: Research on Exceptional Experiences*, (Hove: Routledge, 2005), 93-8, p. 94; see also Carl Sagan, *The Demon-*

psychologist John Beloff's *Parapsychology: A Concise History*, is so concise that his first chapter is on Mesmerism, with just a fifteen-page prologue covering 'renaissance magic', 'science and scepticism', and 'romanticism and the resurgence of the occult'.¹⁷ However, this paucity of historical analysis in the scientific literature is not surprising because scientists prefer robust evidence in the form of quantifiable data from well designed and controlled, replicable trials, rather than qualitative, non-replicable anecdotes of experiences even from the most sincere of witnesses. Accordingly, there are many scientific researchers who provide no historical context for their subject at all, and only discuss theories and findings from almost exclusively modern (c. 1900 onwards) scientific trials and cases.¹⁸

In addition, non-academics have published popular compendiums and 'histories' of the paranormal, of which the most comprehensive is journalist Brian Inglis's two part work, *Natural and Supernatural* and *Science and Parascience*. The early modern period is represented by a selection of European cases with little contextual analysis in a forty-page section 'From the Renaissance to the Age of Reason' with subsections on Alchemy, Miracles, Witchcraft, Ghosts and Second Sight. Inglis's approach is to work "within a hypothetical paradigm" and to write about events "as if they may have occurred", with quantity and quality of testimony as his chief criteria.¹⁹ This is not only an unscientific method but also makes poor quality history. In fact any meaningful history of anomalous experiences and associated beliefs in the early modern period can only be progressed by professional historians.

Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark (New York: Random House Inc & Ballantine Books, 1996), especially chapter 7 'The Demon-Haunted World' pp. 113-34.

¹⁷ John Beloff, *Parapsychology: A Concise History* (London: Athlone Press, 1993).

¹⁸ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam Press & Black Swan, 2006); Daniel C. Dennet, *Breaking the Spell: Religion as a natural phenomenon* (London: Penguin Books, 2006); Wendy M. Grossman and Christopher C. French, eds., *Why Statues Weep: The Best of The Skeptic* (London: Philosophy Press, 2010); Terence Hines, *Pseudoscience and the Paranormal: A Critical Examination of the Evidence* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1988); Bruce Hood, *Supersense: From Superstition to Religion – the Brain Science of Belief* (London: Constable & Robinson Ltd, 2009); Michael Shermer, *Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudoscience, Superstition and other confusions of our time* (London: Souvenir Press Ltd, 1997, 2002, 2007); and, Stuart Sutherland, *Irrationality* (London: Constable & Company 1992, Pinter & Martin Ltd, 2007).

¹⁹ Brian Inglis, *Natural and Supernatural: A history of the paranormal from earliest times to 1914* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), p. 13; Brian Inglis, *Science and Parascience: A history of the paranormal, 1914-1939* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1984).

As mentioned above, the attention that early modern supernatural beliefs received from historians before Keith Thomas was not relative to the prevalence of that belief. Witchcraft, with its judicial trials, convictions and executions, was hard to ignore, but the rest were largely neglected. Thomas does not seem to have addressed this issue of the historiography. I think this hesitation of historians to engage with the supernatural stems from concerns of contamination: by studying beliefs which are “rightly disdained by intelligent persons”, the researcher risks being disdained themselves. I have seen modern psychical researchers and ‘believers’ of the paranormal openly mocked or ridiculed by sceptical researchers in lectures and conferences, if less often in print.²⁰ The interesting question is why this risk applies to the study of paranormal-type beliefs but not to the study of equally unproven contemporary medical practices (e.g. blood-letting), religious beliefs (e.g. transubstantiation) or cosmological theories (e.g. ether and the celestial spheres).

Stuart Clark answers that question in part in his impressive and thought-provoking *Thinking with Demons*, which re-examines early modern European witchcraft beliefs in the cultural and intellectual context of contemporary beliefs about nature, magic, history, religion, and politics. He explains how until the recent shift towards recognising truths as shared constructs of language (intersubjective realities), historical research was based on a realist model of knowledge (objective reality). This restricted witchcraft (and other supernatural beliefs) more than medical or cosmological studies because the associated phenomena were not real – magic and demons do not exist objectively. Consequently, the beliefs were either dismissed as mistaken or irrational, or explained away as a secondary effect caused by some other circumstances e.g. social, political, economic, etc., with no attempt to establish any conceptual link.²¹ The beliefs of organised religion are generally treated with sensitivity and respect, despite also lacking any objective factual foundation.

Clark recommends that historians must be relativist in their approach and pay no attention to the “referential truth or falsity” of beliefs, except within the context of a

²⁰ For an example in print, see Stephen Law, *Believing Bullshit: How Not to Get Sucked into an Intellectual Black Hole* (New York: Prometheus Books, 2011).

²¹ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp. 3-5.

contemporary debate.²² For contemporaries there was no clear separation between ‘science’ and the supernatural. As Clark explained in an earlier paper, natural philosophers and ‘scientists’ could be demonologists “without any sense of incongruity or of the compromising of their criteria of rational inquiry [...or...] intellectual embarrassment”.²³ He explains that the concept of diabolic witchcraft was a contingent construction of the “other”, that is to say it was defined by what it was not and what it was contrasted with, and therefore cannot be studied meaningfully in isolation.²⁴ Whilst I agree on the importance of context, history that is entirely contextual and relativist risks losing all meaning and relevance for the modern reader and therefore I aim to find a balance between the relativist and referential approach and connect contemporary with modern understanding.

Assessing all anomalous experiences and associated beliefs in the early modern period is too extensive and diverse for one thesis. The sheer size of Thomas and Clark’s books show the monumental scale of the subject; in comparison, Jane Davidson and Darren Oldridge’s accessible but brief books attempt to cover the same ground but struggle to add new insights.²⁵ Many historians opt to concentrate on specific topics, for example ‘second sight’ (precognitive visions) in Scotland, ghosts, or providence. Some historians narrow the topic by limiting it to a single person, such as the alchemy of natural philosopher, Robert Boyle [1627-1691].²⁶ A specific topic would preclude any assessment of a general concept of ‘paranormal’, but restricting the field of vision to a single person would at least provide a manageable perspective.

²² Clark, *Thinking*, pp. 7-8.

²³ Stuart Clark, ‘The scientific status of demonology’, in Brian Vickers, ed., *Occult and Scientific Mentalities in the Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 351-74, p. 352.

²⁴ Clark, *Thinking*, p. 9.

²⁵ Darren Oldridge, *Strange Histories: The trial of the pig, the walking dead, and other matters of fact from the medieval and Renaissance worlds* (London: Routledge, 2005); Jane P. Davidson, *Early Modern Supernatural: The Dark Side of European Culture, 1400-1700* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012); Darren Oldridge, *The Supernatural in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Routledge, 2016).

²⁶ For example, see: Michael Hunter, *The Occult Laboratory: Magic, Science and Second Sight in Late 17th-Century Scotland*, (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2001); Owen Davies, *The Haunted: A Social History of Ghosts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Alexandra Walsham, *Providence in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); and, Lawrence M. Principe, *The Aspiring Adept: Robert Boyle and his Alchemical Quest*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

An excellent model for this approach is Michael MacDonald's *Mystical Bedlam*, a study of mental illness in early modern England through the case notes of Dr. Richard Napier [1559-1634]. MacDonald examines detailed experiences and explanations to understand the contemporary religious, social and cultural variables that influenced their interpretations. MacDonald aims to discover "how popular beliefs about insanity and healing illuminate the mental world of ordinary people" and "endeavoured to place the experiences and beliefs of these ordinary people in their immediate historical context by analysing them in light of other contemporary accounts of madness and healing in medical and legal documents, diaries and autobiographies, scientific and religious writings and imaginative literature".²⁷ MacDonald acknowledges the "parochial" limitations of his study,²⁸ but it has the credibility of being founded on his detailed and comprehensive 'bottom-up' analysis. In following MacDonald's model, this thesis must similarly be cautious about the dangers of generalisation and anachronism.

To find suitable source material, I considered a number of early modern authors who published accounts of anomalous experiences and associated beliefs. Thomas explains how the principal researchers attempted to put the "supernatural" on a "genuinely scientific foundation" by publishing only accounts with reliable witnesses. The list comprises the classical scholar Meric Casaubon [1599-1671], philosopher and theologian Henry More [1614-1687], mathematician and philosopher George Sinclair [d. 1696], clergyman and philosopher Joseph Glanvill [1636-1680] and theologian Richard Baxter [1615-1691].²⁹ I have selected More because he was the first of those authors to use supernatural material in this way—arguably establishing the precedent of combining natural theology with a natural history of spirits that the others subsequently emulated—and he produced a large body of work including theology, philosophy and metaphysics. The analysis of his writings will make possible a reconstruction of his perspective on anomalous experiences and associated beliefs, giving indications about a wider shared concept.

²⁷ Michael MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. xii.

²⁸ MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. xiii.

²⁹ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 690.

I have already used several different terms to describe these anomalous experiences and associated beliefs including paranormal, supernatural, and miraculous. Following MacDonald's example, I will use contemporary terminology to avoid anachronisms. Clark notes there was no shared general term in the early modern period, but proposes the term 'preternatural', which was adopted, if inconsistently, by many contemporary natural philosophers.³⁰ More only used the term 'preternatural' (or its derivatives) four times across all his works. He used a variety of different phrases, but by far the most common descriptor was 'miracle' or 'miraculous' (used over five hundred times), followed by 'strange', 'supernatural' and 'extraordinary' (each used between one hundred, and a hundred and fifty times).³¹ One phrase that reasonably represents his description of the majority of his cases is "miraculous and supernaturall effects."³² I will therefore adopt his phrase (albeit with modern spelling) to use as an appropriate contemporary term to describe the anomalous experiences and associated beliefs throughout the thesis.

The majority of this chapter is devoted to the review of the historiography of More to establish what research has been published, and determine the degree of consideration given to his collections and explanations of miraculous and supernatural phenomena. First, I will introduce More in a brief biographical summary to provide some context for the ensuing historiographic discussion.

1.2 Biography

Henry More was born on 12th October 1614 in Grantham in Lincolnshire, the twelfth child of Alexander and Anne More. His father was sometime alderman and mayor of Grantham and his family were strict Calvinists. The young More was a keen reader and, after grammar school in Grantham and Eton, he followed his uncle and two of his elder brothers to Christ's College, Cambridge in 1631 where he was tutored by Robert Gell [d. 1665].³³ More was a gifted student, but became disillusioned with the traditional scholastic curriculum in the 1630s, especially regarding metaphysics

³⁰ Clark, *Thinking*, pp. 152-60, 170-1.

³¹ Excluding repeat uses in contents listings of chapter headings.

³² More, AA, III.v, p. 122.

³³ Sarah Hutton, 'More, Henry (1614–1687)', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19181>, last accessed 3rd February 2010].

and the soul, until he discovered Platonism. More graduated Bachelor of Arts in 1636 and in 1639 he became a Master of Arts and a deacon of the Church. More was ordained in 1641 and his uncle Gabriel acquired the living at Ingoldsby, near Grantham, for him.³⁴ However when Gell took up the rectory of St Mary Aldermary in London in 1641, More was elected to his vacated Fellowship at Christ's.³⁵

At Christ's Henry More taught, among others, George Rust [1628-1670], the future Church of Ireland bishop of Dromore, and influenced John Sharp [1645-1714], the future Archbishop of York.³⁶ He met John Finch [1626-1682], the future physician and diplomat, and tutored his half-sister Anne [1631-1679], the future Viscountess Conway and Killultagh, by letter from 1650. The Finch and Conway families were valuable patrons, but also became his good friends. More and Anne Finch/Conway exchanged news and ideas ranging from the flowering of primroses to meteors and apparitions.³⁷ Nicolson describes More as "one of the most persuasive and compelling teachers of his generation."³⁸ More had other influential friends and associates including the natural philosophers Robert Boyle and Isaac Newton [1642-1726], and the Flemish mystic and physician Francis Mercury van Helmont [1614-1699]. Rogers acknowledges More was not very politically active, citing More's rejection of preferment, and describing him as the 'paradigm of the academic don who chose deliberately to remain in his snug little college position and not to encounter the wider world.' More denied taking the Covenant, despite being only one of three Fellows at Christ's to survive the ejection of 1644, but he did accept the Engagement.³⁹

³⁴ Robert Crocker, 'Henry More: a Biographical Essay', in Sarah Hutton, ed., *Henry More (1614-1687) Tercentenary Studies* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), 1-17, pp. 1-3.

³⁵ C. C. Brown, 'Henry More's 'Deep Retirement': New Material on the Early Years of the Cambridge Platonist', *The Review of English Studies*, 20:80 (1969), 445-54.

³⁶ For a detailed examination of tutorial influence including Henry More, see Marilyn A. Lewis, "'Educational Influence': a new model for understanding tutorial relationships in seventeenth-century Oxbridge", *History of Universities*, XXVII/2 (2013), 70-104 and appendices I-III.

³⁷ For example, see Letter, Henry More to Anne Conway, 4th January 1662 in *The Conway Letters: The Correspondence of Anne, Viscountess Conway, Henry More, and their Friends 1642-1684*, ed. Marjorie Hope Nicolson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1930); revised Sarah Hutton (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 197-8.

³⁸ Marjorie Hope Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom and Mountain Glory: The Development of the Aesthetics of the Infinite* (Seattle & London: University of Washington Press, 1959, 1997), p. 114.

³⁹ G. A. J. Rogers, 'The Other Worldly Philosophers and the Real World: The Cambridge Platonists, Theology and Politics', in G. A. J. Rogers, J. M. Vienne and Y. C. Zarka, eds., *The Cambridge Platonists in Philosophical Context: Politics, Metaphysics and Religion* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 3-15, p. 11.

More spent most of his adult life at Cambridge, with the occasional trip to London and Holland, but he also spent considerable time at the Conway's home at Ragley, Warwickshire. In 1660 More was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. At the Restoration, the surviving exiles returned to Cambridge and many of the 'Latitude-men' were ousted. More kept his position, but not without criticism from the likes of the royal chaplain and poet, Joseph Beaumont [1616–1699], master of first Jesus College from 1662 and then Peterhouse, Cambridge, from 1663.⁴⁰ It was a tense and difficult time. More's letter to Anne Conway described the charges against his friend and Master of Christ's, Ralph Cudworth [1617-1688] as "whatever [...] malice could invent", such as the accusation that the college was "a seminary of Heretics."⁴¹ Crocker suggests that the Archbishop of Canterbury, Gilbert Sheldon [1598-1677], may have intervened to call an end to the potentially destabilising public controversy.⁴²

More was proposed by Oxford theologian and natural philosopher John Wilkins [1614-1672] and elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1662-3. He was not a very active member and was not a participant of any Society committee.⁴³ He seemed quite content as a Fellow at Christ's, declining offers throughout his life, such as the Mastership of Christ's, Provostship of Trinity College, Dublin, Deanery of St Patrick's; he only accepted a prebend in Gloucester Cathedral to resign it immediately in favour of his friend, Dr. Edward Fowler [1631-1714] (subsequently Bishop of Gloucester). Even the living of Ingoldsby was passed to his friend John Worthington [1618-1671] and subsequently to his former sizar, Richard Ward [1658/9-1723].⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Robert Crocker, *Henry More, 1614-1687: A Biography of the Cambridge Platonist* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003), p. 84; see also W. H. Kelliher, 'Beaumont, Joseph (1616–1699)', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2006) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/1878>, last accessed 28th August 2013]

⁴¹ Henry More to Anne Conway, letter dated 29 June 1665, in *Conway Letters*, 241-3, p. 242.

⁴² Crocker, *More*, pp. 87-8.

⁴³ Michael Hunter, *The Royal Society and its Fellows 1660-1700: the morphology of an early scientific institution*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Alden Press for the British Society for the History of Science, 1982, 1994), pp. 70 & 115; Michael Hunter, *Establishing the New Science: The Experience of the Early Royal Society*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), p. 81 note 25.

⁴⁴ Hutton, 'More', *ODNB*; and Sarah Hutton, Cecil Courtney, Michelle Courtney, Robert Crocker & Rupert Hall, eds., 'Introduction' in *Richard Ward: The Life of Henry More Parts 1 and 2* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), p. ix.

More was generous to his family and acquaintances and charitable to the poor and good causes; his “*soft Heart*” even abhorred animal cruelty. Ward described More’s rationale for declining preferment as driven by his “pure Love of *Contemplation*, and *Solitude*”, and because he could do “greater Service” to God, and also promote “Able and Worthy Persons”. More’s piety was demonstrated through his many theological works. He was self-disciplined and maintained, “*That the Soul naturally rules the Body, (at least it ought so to do) as a Master his Servant*”, and also “*That the Divine Sense in us, as a sort of Heavenly Flame, must be fann’d by frequent Meditation and Devotion, to keep it duly alive*”. More regarded his “Excess” of humour to be one of his “*greatest Infirmities*”, and he was described by his acquaintances as “one of the *Merriest Greeks*” at Christ’s.⁴⁵ The saintly image of More as portrayed by Ward sits uncomfortably with the bitter and vituperative remarks in certain heated exchanges we will see in chapter two.⁴⁶

More’s retiring scholarly lifestyle should not be mistaken for reclusiveness; he was a well-known and influential thinker and theologian in his time. An engraved portrait from 1675 shows him relaxing in the countryside outside Cambridge (see Figure 1 in Appendix 1). He maintained a network of contacts and was a prolific author with demand for many of his works requiring multiple editions in English and Latin. His publisher, Richard Chiswell, stated that from 1660, More’s publications “*ruled all the Booksellers in London*”.⁴⁷ Interest in More’s ideas endured into the eighteenth century with the publication of collected works, reprints and Ward’s biography. More was credited with two neologisms: ‘nullibist’ (one who affirms spirits exist nowhere in the physical world, such as the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes [1588-1679]), and the more significant ‘Cartesian’ (pertaining to the philosophy of René Descartes [1596-1650]).⁴⁸ More also seems to have invented the term

⁴⁵ Richard Ward, *The Life of the Learned and Pious Dr Henry More* (London: Joseph Downing, 1710), pp. 86, 59, 115, 120. See also modern edition by Hutton et al, *Life*.

⁴⁶ See chapter two, pp. 56-7, 82, 92.

⁴⁷ Ward, *Life*, pp. 162-3.

⁴⁸ See *OED*, ‘nullibist’ & ‘cartesian’

[<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/Entry/129056?redirectedFrom=nullibist#eid>, last accessed 9th October 2018] &

[<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.bbk.ac.uk/view/Entry/28284?redirectedFrom=cartesian#eid>, last accessed 9th October 2018]. The *OED* is not quite correct. ‘Nullibist’, spelled ‘Nullubist’ by More, is in *DD-123*, rather than *DD-45* as stated. Also, ‘Cartesian’ does not appear in “*An Antidote against Atheism* (1656?)” as referenced, but in fact More’s earliest reference was in *SLA* (1651).

‘Holenmerian’ (one who believes the indivisible soul must exist as a whole in each part of the divisible body, e.g. Plotinus, St Augustine, and St Thomas Aquinas), but the term did not catch on.⁴⁹ More was driven to study, to think and to write with his mind “*over-free, and went even faster than he almost desir’d*”.⁵⁰ The clergyman and former fellow of Christ’s, Dr. William Owtram [Outram] [c.1626-1679], reportedly declared More was “*the Holiest Person upon the Face of the Earth*”.⁵¹ Ward claimed Hobbes once said “*That if his own Philosophy was not True, he knew of none that he should sooner like than MORE’s of Cambridge*.”⁵² More never married and remained at Cambridge until he died on 1st September 1687.⁵³ More was satisfied with his life, and Ward reported that he had declared “*That if he was to live his whole time over again, he would do just, for the main, as he had done*.”⁵⁴

1.3 Literature Review

More has been of great interest to specialist historians of philosophy and theology as well as social and cultural historians, resulting in an extensive and diverse body of secondary literature. I recommend Robert Crocker’s two bibliographies of More for fairly comprehensive lists up to 1990 and 2003 respectively.⁵⁵ This literature review will briefly examine the wide-ranging historical research on More, with the primary focus being on the assessment of the miraculous and supernatural phenomena in his works, making this the first comprehensive historiographical review on this subject. In general, I will only comment if a researcher has significantly discussed the subject, although sometimes silence can also be revealing.

1.3.1 Early Editors and Commentators

The first modern historians of More struggled to reconcile their admiration for his philosophy and theology with their embarrassment at his persistent use of cases of

⁴⁹ ‘Holenmerian’ is not in the *OED*. For a more detailed examination of the philosophical context of ‘Nullibism’ and ‘Holenmerianism’, see Jasper Reid, *The Metaphysics of Henry More* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012), pp. 141-72.

⁵⁰ Ward, *Life*, p. 145.

⁵¹ Ward, *Life*, p. 78.

⁵² Ward, *Life*, p. 80.

⁵³ Hutton, ‘More’, *ODNB*.

⁵⁴ Ward, *Life*, p. 77.

⁵⁵ Robert Crocker, ‘A Bibliography of Henry More’, in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 219-47, pp. 221-34; Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 207-15.

miraculous and supernatural effects. This was generally managed in one of two ways: comment on More's 'credulity' on this subject and disregard the case material; or, ignore it altogether.

John Tulloch's seminal work, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century* (1874), includes lengthy sections from the works of the Cambridge Platonists interspersed with biography, commentary and analysis focussing on their attempt to establish a philosophical and rational basis for Christian theology. Tulloch acknowledges the prevalence of supernatural belief in the early modern period, but considers More to be excessively credulous for placing such value on "the most absurd and frivolous" accounts. Tulloch cannot comprehend how More's "acute, searching, and logical" mind could simultaneously indulge "such puerility and nonsense".⁵⁶

After Tulloch, Grace Neal Dolson analyses More's manual on ethics, *Enchiridion Ethicum*, describing it as exhibiting More's "rambling" style and eclectic ethics. She comments on prominence of reason in More's work and his close alignment with Descartes on emotions, discounting the physiological aspects. Dolson explains the 'Boniform Faculty of the Soul' as the conscience and attempts to explain some of More's apparently inconsistent statements.⁵⁷ However, her paper primarily analyses only the first of the three books comprising *Enchiridion Ethicum*.

There was a bubble of interest in More and the Cambridge Platonists in the late 1920s and early 1930s focussing on the philosophy of their theology. Flora Isabel MacKinnon published extracts from three of More's works together with an outline summary of his philosophy and a critical and historical commentary. MacKinnon is perplexed why "the crudest superstitions of witchcraft and folklore appear side by side in apparent harmony and concord with clear thought, scientific deduction, and acute psychological observation", although she astutely notes More's tendency to

⁵⁶ John Tulloch, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century* (Edinburgh & London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), pp. 346, 358-9, 389-90, 406-8.

⁵⁷ Grace Neal Dolson, 'The Ethical System of Henry More', *The Philosophical Review*, 6:6 (1897), 593-607.

judge material less by “inherent value” than by how it upheld “spiritual reality”.⁵⁸ Her edition excludes the sections of More’s works that contained cases of miraculous and supernatural effects, such as the entirety of Books II and III of *An Antidote against Atheism*, and even sections of individual chapters such as Book II chapter xvi of *The Immortality of the Soul* where the dozen examples of souls communicating after death via dreams and apparitions are omitted. Geoffrey Bullough’s abridged edition of More’s *Philosophical Poems* comments on the influence of Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene* and simply dismisses More’s belief in the supernatural as “credulous”.⁵⁹ Frederick J. Powicke, William Inge, G. P. H. Pawson and Ernst Cassirer published general commentaries on Cambridge Platonism. Powicke briefly notes that More’s use of miraculous and supernatural phenomena was almost unique among the Cambridge Platonists and that they were “aberrations” of his mind.⁶⁰ Both Inge and Pawson consider More’s beliefs “naïve”, but acknowledge his intention to “establish the reality” of incorporeal spiritual beings.⁶¹ Cassirer, who ignores More’s use of supernatural phenomena altogether, argued that Tulloch’s characterisation of the Cambridge School as representing ‘theological rationalism’ was inadequate because they lacked “moral attitude and conviction”.⁶²

A generation later, many historians remained wary of analysing the supernatural in More’s works. Gerald Cragg’s works focus on the religious thought of the Cambridge Platonists and the extracts he cites exclude any cases of the supernatural. Whilst Cragg understands More considered supernatural phenomena “provided the most cogent confirmation of theism”, he ‘puzzles’ over how More could believe such ‘evidence’ and yet elsewhere argue with cogent reason.⁶³ Like Cassirer, Aharon Lichtenstein argues against Tulloch that More’s theology was more complex with its

⁵⁸ MacKinnon, ‘Introduction’, *Philosophical Writings of Henry More* (New York: AMS Press, Inc, 1925, 1969 (reprint)), pp. xvii, xxvii, xxi.

⁵⁹ Geoffrey Bullough, ‘Introduction’, *Philosophical Poems of Henry More* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1931), pp. xlii-xliii, lxxxi.

⁶⁰ Frederick J. Powicke, *The Cambridge Platonists* (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1926), pp. 163-4, 159-60.

⁶¹ G. P. H. Pawson, *The Cambridge Platonists and Their Place in Religious Thought* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1930), pp. 68 & 57; William Ralph Inge, *The Platonic Tradition in English Religious Thought* (London: Longmans, Green and Co. Ltd, 1926), especially pp. 53-7.

⁶² Ernst Cassirer, *The Platonic Renaissance in England* [*Die platonische Renaissance in England und die Schule von Cambridge* (Leipzig & Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1932)] (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1953), translated by James P. Pettegrove, pp. 30-1.

⁶³ G. R. Cragg, *From Puritanism to the Age of Reason* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950); Gerald R. Cragg, *The Cambridge Platonists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 163.

anti-intellectualism and moralism. Lichtenstein acknowledges how proving the existence of spirit was “One of [More’s] primary lifelong concerns”, but says nothing further about it.⁶⁴ Like MacKinnon and Cragg, C. A. Patrides’s edition of selected works of the Cambridge Platonists also omits all More’s supernatural case material, which he describes as “problems”, “absurdities”, “unnerving”, “nonsense”, and even “perversities”. Borrowing from the mad Prince of Denmark, Patrides remarks, “Henry More, I fear, could not always tell a hawk from a handsaw.”⁶⁵

1.3.2 Seeds of Change

In 1925, Marjorie Hope Nicolson published a paper on the spirit world of More and the poet John Milton [1608-1674], but she discusses only the concepts of angels and demons, or aerial genii, rather than More’s actual cases.⁶⁶ However, in 1930 Nicolson published an edited collection of *The Conway Letters* (revised and extended by Sarah Hutton in 1992) comprising the correspondence of Anne Conway and her family and friends. About half of all the letters are between Conway and More, and most of those are from More in which he shared his thoughts on a variety of different topics and issues with Conway, including the occasional miraculous and supernatural effect. Nicolson’s appreciation of the personal and historical contexts is evident in her sensitive commentary. For example, before introducing the faith healers, known as stokers, Matthew Coker [active 1654] and Valentine Greatrakes [1628-1682], the reader is cautioned against ‘scoffing’ at early modern ‘superstition’, and Nicolson calls for “sympathetic understanding” because “the miracles of one day have become the commonplace of the next”.⁶⁷ More ensured he was at Ragley when Greatrakes arrived not only because Conway’s potential cure was of “surpassing importance” to him, but also because of his interest in the operation of the cures.⁶⁸ More and Conway shared an “interest in psychical phenomena”. The details of two Irish apparitions, investigated by Conway and Jeremy Taylor, Bishop of Dromore [1613-1667] in 1662-3, were subsequently documented and published in *Saducismus*

⁶⁴ Aharon Lichtenstein, *Henry More: The Rational Theology of a Cambridge Platonist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 208-11, 34, 183.

⁶⁵ C. A. Patrides, *The Cambridge Platonists* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969), pp. xxv, 32.

⁶⁶ Marjorie H. Nicolson, ‘The Spirit World of Milton and More’, *Studies in Philology*, 22:4 (1925), 433-52.

⁶⁷ Nicolson, ‘Interludes’, in *Conway Letters*, pp. 112-26, 115.

⁶⁸ Nicolson, ‘Valentine Greatrakes’, in *Conway Letters*, pp. 244-60, 248.

Triumphatus (1681).⁶⁹ At one point, Nicolson over-generously describes More's investigation of a local ghost story as 'scientific'.⁷⁰ Elsewhere, she makes an inadvertent judgement by distinguishing More's correspondents as "apocalyptic scholars" and "credulous spiritists".⁷¹ That instance aside, Nicolson is the first modern historian to accept More's supernatural beliefs as a consistent element of his religio-cultural seventeenth-century worldview, perhaps resulting from the empathy developed from her familiarity with More's personal correspondence. Nicolson nostalgically concludes, "Let the prosaic science of a modern world, which has excluded the spirit with other vestiges of a more charming past, cast what stones it will."⁷²

1.3.3 Key Modern Research

The 1990s and 2000s saw a peak in More studies, probably inspired by the conference marking the tercentenary of More's death, held at Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1987. I would argue the most discerning More scholars are Sarah Hutton and Robert Crocker, but there are also others whose work provides valuable contributions to the history of More such as A. Rupert Hall and Alexander Jacob.

Hutton, the foremost modern historical scholar of More, edited and published the tercentenary conference papers in 1990,⁷³ revised and expanded Nicholson's invaluable *Conway Letters*,⁷⁴ co-edited (with Hall and Crocker and others) Ward's *The Life of Henry More*,⁷⁵ and wrote More's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.⁷⁶ She has also authored articles on More's diverse interests such

⁶⁹ Nicolson, 'Ireland and Cambridge', in *Conway Letters*, pp. 170-80, 174-6; "Letter of Thomas Alcock [Taylor's secretary] to Dr. H. More" 'Relations XXVI & XXVII' in Joseph Glanvill, *Saducismus Triumphatus*, ed. Henry More (London: J. Collins and S. Lownds, 1681), II pp. 276-90.

⁷⁰ The account was related by C. J. Langston from the Conway 'family tradition'. More investigated a ghost story whilst Greatrakes cured the frail witness, Alice Slade. Nicolson praises More's approach: "confident though he might be of the existence of spirits, his own scientific temper, as well as his common sense, had taught him always to suspect a natural before a supernatural cause." More supposedly found a buried passageway that led to a tomb in the ruins of Cookhill Priory, where the gurgling of a small brook reverberated through the vault. Whilst the stream accounted for the murmurings the witness heard, no explanation was given for the visions. See Nicolson, 'Valentine Greatrakes', in *Conway Letters*, pp. 244-60.

⁷¹ Nicolson, 'Sequels', in *Conway Letters*, pp. 452-76.

⁷² Nicolson, 'Ireland and Cambridge', in *Conway Letters*, pp. 170-80, 175.

⁷³ Hutton, ed., *Henry More*.

⁷⁴ See Nicolson, ed., *Conway Letters*.

⁷⁵ Hutton et al, eds., *Life*.

⁷⁶ Hutton, 'More', *ODNB*.

as Platonism,⁷⁷ Apocalyptic revelations,⁷⁸ his exegetical method,⁷⁹ the German mystic Jacob Boehme [1575-1624],⁸⁰ the criticisms of theologian Edward Stillingfleet [1635-1699] and Anglican apologetics,⁸¹ scepticism,⁸² philosophy,⁸³ and ethics.⁸⁴ Hutton notes that research has often focussed on More's natural philosophy and metaphysics, but further research could be done on other topics interrelated with More's program to defend religion against atheism and enthusiasm such as his poetry, Platonism, mysticism, spirituality, prophecy and Kabbalah.⁸⁵ She observes that historians have often been 'embarrassed' by More's supernatural beliefs, even though such beliefs were commonplace among the intelligentsia, and thus see him as "credulous" and his mysticism as 'undermining' his philosophy. More's use of supernatural cases was one of his "demonstrative arguments for the existence of God and the immortality of souls".⁸⁶ More's scepticism was directed at the credibility of testimony rather than the "paranormal phenomena (ghosts, witches, and other spirits)" themselves, hence his "dangerous" gamble with the supposedly incontestable miracles of Christ.⁸⁷ She comments on More's attempts to apply new scientific observational principles to proving the existence of immaterial spirits, and Boyle's tactful rejection of the hylarchic principle. She explains how More's *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671) was the only major British work on

⁷⁷ Sarah Hutton, 'Introduction to the Renaissance and seventeenth century', in Anna Baldwin & Sarah Hutton, eds., *Platonism and the English Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 67-75.

⁷⁸ Sarah Hutton, 'Henry More and the Apocalypse', *Studies in Church History*, 10 (1994) (Prophecy and Eschatology, ed. Michael Wilks), 131-40.

⁷⁹ Sarah Hutton, 'Inconisms, Enthusiasm and Origen: Henry More Reads the Bible', in Ariel Hessayon & Nicholas Keene, eds., *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 192-207.

⁸⁰ Sarah Hutton, 'Henry More and Jacob Boehme', in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 157-71.

⁸¹ Sarah Hutton, 'Edward Stillingfleet, Henry More, and the decline of *Moses Atticus*: a note on seventeenth-century Anglican apologetics' in Richard Kroll, Richard Ashcraft and Perez Zagorin, eds., *Philosophy, science, and religion in England 1640-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 68-84.

⁸² Sarah Hutton, 'Henry More, John Finch, and *The History of Scepticism*', in Jose R. Maia Neto and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *Skepticism in Renaissance and Post-Renaissance Thought* (New York: Humanity Books, 2004), 43-64.

⁸³ Sarah Hutton, *British Philosophy in the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), especially pp. 136-59.

⁸⁴ Sarah Hutton, 'Henry More's Moral Philosophy: Self-Determination and its Limits', *Studia z Historii Filozofii*, 8:3 (2017), 11-24.

⁸⁵ Hutton, 'Introduction', in Nicolson, ed., *Conway Letters*, pp. xiv-v.

⁸⁶ Hutton, 'Introduction', in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, p. ix-x; Hutton, 'History of Scepticism', pp. 53-4.

⁸⁷ Hutton, 'History of Scepticism', p. 54.

metaphysics.⁸⁸ Hutton astutely describes More as “a transitional figure” caught between the different intellectual worlds of the mystical Renaissance and rational Enlightenment.⁸⁹ Hutton also edited the special edition of the *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* introducing new studies demonstrating the continuing historical importance of Cambridge Platonism.⁹⁰

A. Rupert Hall contributed a chapter on More and the scientific revolution to Hutton’s *Tercentenary Studies*,⁹¹ published a ‘scientific’ biography of More and co-edited Ward’s *Life of Henry More*. Hall’s biography concentrates on More’s natural philosophy, does not cover poetry or theology, and has “dealt lightly” with More’s interests in witchcraft and spirits.⁹² As a historian of science, especially of Newton, Hall sometimes looks at More through a Newtonian lens and judges him lacking—just a “minor figure of intellectual history”. Hall describes the growth of interest in the occult, magic and witchcraft throughout the Renaissance as a “growth of credulity” and comments that More’s concerns for the immaterial world of spirits “have long since ceased to resonate in our own ears.”⁹³ In his chapter on ‘The Spirit World’, Hall defines More’s concept of ‘spirit’ and outlines More’s disagreement with Descartes about the role of spirit, his shared interest in spirit phenomena with Anne Conway, the “unholy alliance” with Glanvill, the debate with the polemicist, John Webster [1611–1682], and More’s ‘credulity’.⁹⁴ Much of Hall’s discussion here is limited to More and Glanvill’s “assiduous” collating of “indisputable evidence” of immaterial spirits for *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681).⁹⁵ Hall also notes how More has been unfairly and anachronistically criticised for his credulity more than his contemporaries: “An historical epoch must be accepted warts and all. Henry More without his ghosts and witches would not have been More.”⁹⁶

⁸⁸ Hutton, *British Philosophy*, pp. 145, 177, 16, 148.

⁸⁹ Hutton, ‘Introduction’, in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, p. x.

⁹⁰ Sarah Hutton, ‘Introduction - The Cambridge Platonists: some new studies’, *BJHP*, 25:5 (2017), 851-7.

⁹¹ A. Rupert Hall, ‘Henry More and the Scientific Revolution’ in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 37-54.

⁹² A. Rupert Hall, *Henry More: Magic, Religion and Experiment* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. xi.

⁹³ Hall, *Henry More*, pp. 127, 28-34, 4-5.

⁹⁴ Hall, *Henry More*, pp. 128-45.

⁹⁵ Hall, *Henry More*, pp. 138, 141.

⁹⁶ Hall, *Henry More*, pp. 125-6, 143.

Hall makes a number of statements that I think are inaccurate and to which I would like to respond. First he claims More's friends, such as Conway and Glanvill, "probably stimulated More's preoccupation with the immaterial and the abstruse, the occult and the supernatural."⁹⁷ However, More's interest in the natural history of spirits is evident from 'The Præexistence of the Soul' in 1647, when these future friends were still children and unknown to More, thus it is far more likely that any influence flowed *from* More. Second, Hall accuses More of selecting evidence indiscriminately, whereas I explain More's selection criteria, his application of them and adjustments to cases in chapter three.⁹⁸ Third, Hall claims More seldom referred to his sources, but in fact the majority were referenced as I have analysed in detail in chapter three.⁹⁹ Fourth, Hall argues More was "embarrassing natural philosophy" through poor logic by striving "to affirm that good is proved by evil" and thus "deduce" God through the "works of the Devil".¹⁰⁰ I contend that Hall's narrow view means he has overlooked that the majority of More's cases concerned divine miracles or providence. Furthermore, More's arguments had a wider purpose in proving fundamental elements of More's metaphysics such as the immateriality and independence of spirits: as More himself concluded, "*No Spirit, no God.*"¹⁰¹

Robert Crocker contributed a historical biography, a chapter on mysticism and enthusiasm, and a bibliography of More to Hutton's *Tercentenary Studies*, published an article on More's illuminism, co-edited Ward's *Life of Henry More*, and published a well-balanced and comprehensive biography.¹⁰² Crocker notes how most historians tackle More in a piecemeal way or as a foil to contemporary thinkers such as Boyle, Newton, or the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza [1632-1677].¹⁰³ In contrast Crocker's biography is a thorough review of More's character, works, theology, philosophy and metaphysics in context and consequently covers some of the less

⁹⁷ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 98.

⁹⁸ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 133. See chapter three, pp. 101-3, 119-22 in this thesis.

⁹⁹ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 139. See chapter three, pp. 109-13 in this thesis.

¹⁰⁰ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 144.

¹⁰¹ More, AA, III.xiii, p. 164 [(1655+), III.xvi].

¹⁰² Crocker, 'Biographical Essay', 1-17; 'Mysticism and Enthusiasm in Henry More', in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 137-55; 'Bibliography', 219-47; Robert Crocker, 'The Role of Illuminism in the Thought of Henry More', in G. A. J. Rogers, J. M. Vienne and Y. C. Zarka, eds., *The Cambridge Platonists in Philosophical Context: Politics, Metaphysics and Religion* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 129-44; Hutton, et al, eds., *Life*; Crocker, *Henry More*.

¹⁰³ Crocker, *Henry More*, p. xx.

well documented aspects of More's life, such as his lucid dream experiences, his collection of spirit cases, and his interpretations of apocalyptic revelation.¹⁰⁴

Crocker observes how More structured his philosophical works hierarchically from intellectual, to rational and finally to the sensual using "proofs from Nature".¹⁰⁵ He erroneously claims that the intelligencer, Samuel Hartlib [1600-1662] inspired More to collect cases of miraculous and supernatural effects and publish them in collaboration with Glanvill, whereas More's correspondence with Hartlib began in 1648 after he had already published supernatural case material in 1647.¹⁰⁶ Crocker suggests the legacy of More and Glanvill's "'scientific' demonology [...] anticipates the spiritualism of the nineteenth century."¹⁰⁷ I think Crocker means 'psychical research' (the study and testing of such phenomena with the objective of proving the existence of life after death) rather than 'spiritualism' (the belief and practice of communication between the dead and the living through mediums). I agree with Crocker's observation that More's own mystical dreams indicate his "extreme imaginative sensitivity", and examine them in chapter four.¹⁰⁸

Crocker devotes a short chapter of his book to 'The Natural History of the World of Spirits' and uses the term 'paranormal', explaining that the contemporary terms 'supernatural' and 'occult' had narrower definitions. Crocker notes that until recently, many historians have "disapproved" of More's fascination with the paranormal, despite its role as "supporting evidence to his more intellectual arguments" of natural theology, seeing it as "regressive" and "at odds with his rationalism".¹⁰⁹ Crocker discusses More's partially implemented 'natural history of spirits' in *An Antidote against Atheism* (1653), 'Præexistency of the Soul' (1647), and *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681), but does not mention his use of cases in his other works or provide any deeper examination of the cases themselves. Half of the chapter is given over to a comparison of the contrasting views on witchcraft and

¹⁰⁴ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. xxiv, 3, 127-40, 104-6.

¹⁰⁵ Crocker, 'Biographical Essay', pp. 4-6.

¹⁰⁶ Crocker, 'Biographical Essay', p. 4. For dating of the More-Hartlib correspondence, see Charles Webster, 'Henry More and Descartes: Some New Sources', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 4:4 (1969), 359-377, especially p. 363 see note 19.

¹⁰⁷ Crocker, 'Biographical Essay', p. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Crocker, 'Role of Illuminism', pp. 129, 137-9. See chapter four, pp. 150-2 in this thesis.

¹⁰⁹ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 127-8, 140 (note 3), 132-3, 111.

apparitions of More and Webster.¹¹⁰ Crocker acknowledges the important role that cases of miraculous and supernatural phenomena played in More's philosophical arguments as "an apologetic method for convincing both the atheist and the uncertain believer of the immortality of the soul, and the reality of the afterlife."¹¹¹

Between 1987 and 1998, Alexander Jacob produced modern English editions of More's *Philosophical Poems* (as *A Platonick Song of the Soul*), *The Immortality of the Soul*, *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* and *Confutatio*, including substantial, though not revolutionary, introductory and analytic sections examining the content, main arguments and context of each work.¹¹² Jasper Reid is critical of Jacob's failure to acknowledge More's philosophical developments and judges Jacob's "understanding of the philosophy itself [...] to be exceedingly weak."¹¹³ Jacob acknowledges More's "traditional" belief regarding miraculous and supernatural effects, his attention to detail, his didactic use of cases for empirical evidence, and his use of a variety of sources across time and geography to demonstrate the universality of belief and phenomena.¹¹⁴ However, I reject Jacob's claims that such cases are "repugnant to the modern sensibility" and that to examine them all "would be tedious", and set out to prove otherwise in this thesis.¹¹⁵ Jacob generally ignores More's case material in his analysis and usually only provides the references to sources in his notes when More provided the specific reference himself.

Allison Coudert's paper 'Henry More and Witchcraft' outlines the historiography of witchcraft from Whig to revisionist perspectives and concludes both are too simplistic to explain why More and Glanvill, both theologians, philosophers and

¹¹⁰ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 128-30, 133-40.

¹¹¹ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 120, 148, 172.

¹¹² Alexander Jacob, 'Introduction' in Alexander Jacob, ed., *Henry More: The Immortality of the Soul* (Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1987), pp. i-ciii; Alexander Jacob, 'Introduction' and 'Analysis' in Alexander Jacob, ed., *Henry More: A Platonick Song of the Soul* (London: Associated University Presses, 1998), pp. xi-xix and pp. 1-136; Alexander Jacob, 'Introduction', in Alexander Jacob, ed., *Henry More's Manual of Metaphysics: A Translation of the Enchiridion Metaphysicum (1679) with an Introduction and Notes* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag AG, 1995), Part 1, pp. i-lxvi, and Part 2 pp. i-xlix; Alexander Jacob, 'Introduction', in Alexander Jacob, ed., *Henry More's Refutation of Spinoza* (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag AG, 1991), p. i-xxxiv.

¹¹³ Reid, *Metaphysics*, p. 161 especially note 85.

¹¹⁴ Jacob, 'Introduction', *IS* (1987), pp. xxviii, lx-i; Jacob, 'Analysis', *Platonick Song* (1998), pp. 96, 98.

¹¹⁵ Jacob, 'Analysis', *Platonick Song* (1998), p. 98.

Royal Society members, engaged with the latest ‘scientific’ theories when writing about witchcraft to disprove atheism and materialism.¹¹⁶ Her paper covers many aspects of More’s internationally recognised work on spirit phenomena, but especially focusses on his collaboration with Glanvill on *Saducismus Triumphatus*. Glanvill and More were concerned that a denial of spirits would lead to atheism and, without the threat of Hell to keep people law-abiding, would result in anarchy. Coudert proposes that More’s writings on spirits were a response to a trinity of perceived atheistic threats—Hobbes, Descartes and Spinoza—and the respective responses were *An Antidote against Atheisme* (1653), *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671) and *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681).¹¹⁷ This summarises the shift in emphasis within More’s works, but I think More’s interest in miraculous and supernatural phenomena was not simply reactive as evidenced by his first publication on the subject in 1647—significantly predating Hobbes’s *Leviathan* in 1651.

Coudert astutely observes that More’s scepticism was “expedient”, i.e. he “only displays scepticism and suspension of judgement when it comes to the opinions of others.” Like many contemporaries, More proposed supernatural solutions too readily because he did not understand how to frame a scientific explanation or what constituted valid evidence.¹¹⁸ Coudert concludes that More and Glanvill’s “attempts at scientific demonology” had the contrary effect to their intended aim because their well attested cases were too mundane and “silly” to support “the *raison d’être* of witchcraft, namely its explanatory power in the face of inexplicable calamity.” This is an interesting point; however, perhaps because of her focus on *Saducismus Triumphatus*, Coudert has overlooked More’s inclusion of more amazing stories in his other works.¹¹⁹

Daniel Fouke considers More’s perception of enthusiasm in depth, covering religious and spiritual experiences, the hermetic alchemist Thomas Vaughan [1621-1666] and alchemy, the Quakers, political and religious enthusiasm, and pneumatology and mechanical enthusiasm. More was among the first to argue that radical religious

¹¹⁶ Alison Coudert, ‘Henry More and Witchcraft’ in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 115-36, pp. 116-8.

¹¹⁷ Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 118-21.

¹¹⁸ Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 129-30.

¹¹⁹ Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 132-3.

experiences were actually hallucinations and delusions caused by physiological factors and moral defects.¹²⁰ Fouke explains how throughout the seventeenth century, divination, ecstasy, visions and witchcraft experiences could be interpreted as natural melancholic symptoms just as readily as they might be attributed to God, angels and demons.¹²¹ Fouke comments on the irony that John Webster, regarded as an enthusiast for his advocacy of alchemy and natural magic, explained witchcraft in terms of delusions.¹²² As More's pneumatology, or "science of spirits", developed, Fouke notes how More distanced himself significantly from the mechanism of Descartes.¹²³ Although Fouke acknowledges More's "empirical evidence for the existence of spirits and supernatural events" and the "essential link" to his theoretical framework, he does not examine the case studies themselves.¹²⁴

In his very readable book on More's metaphysics, Jasper Reid explores More's theories of atoms, Hyle (first matter), real space, spiritual presence, spiritual extension, living matter, mechanism, the Spirit of Nature and the life of the soul and describes More as the most eminent English philosopher of his lifetime.¹²⁵ Reid observes that the interconnectedness in More's metaphysics requires his theory of matter to be considered in conjunction with his theory of spiritual reality in order to understand them.¹²⁶ Reid analyses More's changing position on holenmerianism from endorsement to refutation.¹²⁷ Reid notes More's intellectual arguments for the aerial vehicles of spirits resulted in his "credulous" use of ubiquitous 'ghost stories' as "solid, *empirical* evidence".¹²⁸ I agree More's cases are inadequate as scientific proof, but I do not think he intended to 'scare' his readers into belief.¹²⁹ More's

¹²⁰ Daniel Fouke, *The Enthusiastical Concerns of Dr. Henry More: Religious Meaning and the Psychology of Delusion* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1997), pp. 6, 230, 234

¹²¹ Fouke, *Enthusiastical Concerns*, p. 7.

¹²² Fouke, *Enthusiastical Concerns*, p. 173.

¹²³ Fouke, *Enthusiastical Concerns*, pp. 2-3.

¹²⁴ Fouke, *Enthusiastical Concerns*, pp. 193, 172, 4.

¹²⁵ Reid, *Metaphysics*, p. 1.

¹²⁶ Reid, *Metaphysics*, p. 10.

¹²⁷ Reid, *Metaphysics*, pp. 158-72; see chapter one, pp. 23-4 in this thesis regarding 'holenmerianism'.

¹²⁸ Reid, *Metaphysics*, pp. 32, 363-4. Reid provides two examples: (1) a sea-fight in the air witnessed by many people in Amsterdam (see More, *AA*, III.ix p. 140 [(1655+), III.xii]); (2) Ficino appearing to a friend at the time of his own death (see More, *IS*, II.xvi pp. 293-4).

¹²⁹ Reid, *Metaphysics*, pp. 7-8, 32-3. Reid provides an example: More's gentleman acquaintance who perceived a clap on the back from an invisible hand (see More, 'Dr. H. M. his Letter' in Glanvill, *ST*, pp. 13-4).

cases were usually verbatim transcriptions with no attempt to dramatise or intensify the affective impact.

David Leech examines More's rational theology in the context of the threat of atheism from the Cartesian philosophy of spirit. Leech carefully dissects and analyses More's concept of spirit including its Plotinian origins, and the ideas of spiritual extension, soul vehicles, and infinity, taking into consideration his Christian apologetic intentions and his influence on Isaac Newton and philosopher Samuel Clarke [1675-1729].¹³⁰

Thomas Harmon Jobe argued that the Glanvill-Webster witchcraft debate, in which More was on Glanvill's side, was a conflict between Paracelsian-Helmontian science and a mechanical corpuscularism, underpinned by a clash of radical Protestant theology against orthodox Anglican theology.¹³¹ Coudert deconstructs Jobe's argument as over-simplistic by explaining the inconsistent and mystical aspects of More's mechanical philosophy and the Cartesian and Royal Society influences on Webster's philosophy. Also, More and Boyle were both Anglican believers in witchcraft, yet their scientific approaches were very different.¹³²

Dmitri Levitin's impressive and scholarly *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science* challenges established views on the history of philosophy by exploring the continuing importance of scholarship on ancient philosophy for early modern intellectuals. In particular, he controversially challenges the existence of the 'Cambridge Platonists' as a valid group, although he acknowledges Marilyn Lewis's work on their tutorial relationships.¹³³ Levitin argues that the 'Cambridge Platonists'

¹³⁰ David Leech, *The Hammer of the Cartesians: Henry More's Philosophy of Spirit and the Origins of Modern Atheism*, (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2013). See also David Leech, "No Spirit, No God": An Examination of the Cambridge Platonist Henry More's Defence of Soul as a Bulwark Against Atheism (Cambridge: University of Cambridge PhD Thesis, 2005).

¹³¹ Thomas Harmon Jobe, 'The Devil in Restoration Science: The Glanvill-Webster Witchcraft Debate', *Isis*, 72:263 (1981), 343-56.

¹³² Coudert, 'Witchcraft', pp. 131-2.

¹³³ Dmitri Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c. 1640-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 16, 126-38. See also Lewis, 'Educational Influence', pp. 70-104 & appendices I-III, and Marilyn A. Lewis, *The Educational Influence of Cambridge Platonism: Tutorial relationships and student networks at Christ's College, Cambridge, 1641-1688*, (London: Birkbeck, University of London PhD Thesis, 2010).

were not all philosophers, nor Platonists, nor united in their interests. He regards Henry More as the idiosyncratic exception rather than the exemplar and attributes the origin of the ‘Cambridge Platonism’ concept to a “nineteenth-century whig story that sought to trace a ‘rationalist’ lineage for ‘liberal’ Anglicanism”.¹³⁴ Hutton rejects Levitin’s denial of Cambridge Platonism, describing how he “outdoes a long line of mis-interpreters”.¹³⁵ Levitin comments briefly that More’s attitude to magic and the world of spirits has been “well studied”, contrary to what I assert here, and he notes More’s credulousness in reciting the miracle claims for Pythagoras.¹³⁶ He also provides a good account of key objections against More’s claims for an ancient philosophical lineage from Moses to the Ancient Greeks and to the Hellenistic scholar and theologian, Origen [c.184 – c.253], describing his mystical theology as “embarrassing” to the English Church.¹³⁷

1.3.4 Further Specialist Studies

There are many books, articles and chapters on specific elements of More’s thought that provide invaluable context for this study, but are of less direct relevance concerning his cases of miraculous and supernatural effects. These include John Hoyles’s analysis of More’s philosophical and theological themes and the (mostly negative) opinions on his poetry.¹³⁸ Wallace Shugg analyses More’s ‘Circulatio Sanguinis’, a poem praising the discovery of the circulation of the blood by physician William Harvey [1578-1657].¹³⁹ C. C. Brown considers the role of More’s efforts to reconcile Greek philosophy with Christian theology in light of the delay in his appointment as a Fellow at Cambridge, and notes his ineptitude at Hebraic numerology.¹⁴⁰ C. A. Staudenbaur shows the parallel structure and sequence of concepts between More’s *Psychathanasia Platonica: or a Platonick Poem of the Immortality of Souls* and *Theologia Platonica de Immortalitate Animorum* by the

¹³⁴ Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 16, 126-38.

¹³⁵ Hutton, ‘New studies’, p. 852 note 1.

¹³⁶ Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, p. 137.

¹³⁷ Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, e.g. pp. 138-46, 485-7, 495-6.

¹³⁸ John Hoyles, *The Waning of the Renaissance 1640-1740: Studies in the Thought and Poetry of Henry More, John Norris and Isaac Watts* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), pp. 1-72.

¹³⁹ Wallace Shugg, ‘Henry More’s “Circulatio Sanguinis”: An Unexamined Poem in Praise of Harvey’, *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 46:2 (1972), 180-9.

¹⁴⁰ Brown, ‘Henry More’s ‘Deep Retirement’’, p. 451; C. C. Brown, ‘The Mere Numbers of Henry More’s Cabbala’ *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 10:1, (1970), 143-53.

Italian Neoplatonist philosopher Marsilio Ficino [1433-1499].¹⁴¹ Jacob argues Staudenbaur's conclusions are over-simplified, and although More borrowed from Ficino, his influences were broader and his cosmic vision was much wider.¹⁴² D. W. Dockrill traces how the Cambridge Platonists adapted Platonism into Christianity; for example More interpreted the Platonic description of the soul as a ray of God as a metaphor for its creation.¹⁴³ Cassandra Gorman examines More's use of allegory to describe some of his key philosophical ideas.¹⁴⁴

Charles Webster's significant article demonstrates how Hartlib facilitated the correspondence between More and Descartes, discusses More's changing attitude to Cartesianism, and also reveals More's disagreement with polymath William Petty [1623-1687] regarding the value of empirical experimentalism compared with rational philosophy.¹⁴⁵ Leigh Penman's article reveals the 'lost' letter from Hartlib to More breaking the news of Descartes's death, and notes More's disinterest in Hartlib's knowledge circulation schemes after his usefulness as a connection to Descartes ended.¹⁴⁶ Nicolson examines More's role in introducing Descartes's philosophical ideas in England.¹⁴⁷ Cohen considers the disagreement between More and Descartes regarding animal automatism.¹⁴⁸ J. E. Saveson compares the Cambridge Platonists' diverse reactions to Descartes's philosophy; for example philosopher John Smith [1618-1652] accepted Cartesian dualism uncritically, whilst Cudworth and More shared concepts of animal souls, plastic nature, and World Soul (or Spirit of Nature) and had a deeper understanding of the inimical implications of a

¹⁴¹ C. A. Staudenbaur, 'Galileo, Ficino, and Henry More's *Psychathanasia*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 29:4 (1968), 565-78.

¹⁴² Alexander Jacob, 'Henry More's *Psychodia Platonica* and its Relationship to Marsilio Ficino's *Theologia Platonica*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 46:4 (1985), 503-22.

¹⁴³ D. W. Dockrill, 'The Heritage of Patristic Platonism in Seventeenth Century English Philosophical Theology', in G. A. J. Rogers, J. M. Vienne and Y. C. Zarka, eds., *The Cambridge Platonists in Philosophical Context: Politics, Metaphysics and Religion* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 55-77, pp. 61, 64-5.

¹⁴⁴ Cassandra Gorman, 'Allegorical Analogies: Henry More's Poetical Cosmology', *Studies in Philology*, 114:1 (2017), 148-70.

¹⁴⁵ Webster, 'New Sources', pp. 364, 366-74.

¹⁴⁶ Leigh T. I. Penman, 'Samuel Hartlib on the death of Descartes: a rediscovered letter to Henry More', *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 69:4 (2015), 361-72.

¹⁴⁷ Marjorie Nicolson, 'The Early Stage of Cartesianism in England', *Studies in Philology*, 26:3 (1929), 356-74.

¹⁴⁸ Leonora D. Cohen, 'Descartes and Henry More on the beast-machine - A translation of their correspondence pertaining to animal automatism', *Annals of Science*, 1:1 (1936), 48-61.

mechanical cosmos.¹⁴⁹ John Henry observes that, in More's view, "philosophy was a handmaiden to religion" and thus his philosophical concept of the soul was inconsistent as he tried to maintain a pneumatology between mortalism and nullibism on the one hand and the perceived absurdities of academic explanations (such as holenmerianism) on the other. More's incorporeal spirits, including God, were extended, but contemporaries could not easily separate the concepts of extension and matter.¹⁵⁰ Igor Agostini re-examines the response of Descartes to More's objection concerning the indefinite extension of the world.¹⁵¹

Alan Gabbey challenges the previously accepted pattern of More's changing attitude to Cartesianism (from initial enthusiasm, considered examination, to final disillusionment and rejection), because More's queries to Descartes in 1648-9 demonstrate he was already aware of all the philosophical problems he would ever raise against Cartesianism. More's later robust rejection of Descartes's philosophy was a change of purpose, not of opinion, from philosophical to theological. His harsher criticisms were intended for the atheistic materialists using Cartesianism, rather than Descartes himself.¹⁵² Gabbey reasoned that "pure mechanism was instantly discountable" in More's view, hence his substitution of the intermediary Spirit of Nature for Boyle's elastic properties of air.¹⁵³

Richard H. Popkin argues More experienced a full sceptical crisis in the 1630s, as radical as Descartes's, yet with biblical prophecies he journeyed from "complete scepticism to utter reliance".¹⁵⁴ In contrast, Gabbey, Hutton, Reid and Coudert maintain More was not an extreme sceptic, and he considered such a position as

¹⁴⁹ J. E. Saveson, 'Differing Reactions to Descartes Among the Cambridge Platonists', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 21:4 (1960), 560-7.

¹⁵⁰ John Henry, 'A Cambridge Platonist's Materialism: Henry More and the Concept of Soul', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 49 (1986), 172-95, pp. 189, 174-7, 194.

¹⁵¹ Igor Agostini, 'Descartes and More on the infinity of the world', *BJHP*, 25:5 (2017), 878-96.

¹⁵² Alan Gabbey, 'Philosophia Cartesiana Triumphata: Henry More (1646-1671)' in Thomas M. Lennon, John M. Nicolas, and John W. Davis, eds., *Problems of Cartesianism* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1982), 171-250, pp. 171-2, 195, 248.

¹⁵³ Alan Gabbey, 'Henry More and the limits of mechanism' in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 19-35, pp. 22-4; 'Cudworth, More and the mechanical analogy' in Richard Kroll, Richard Ashcraft and Perez Zagorin, eds., *Philosophy, science, and religion in England 1640-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 109-27, p. 120.

¹⁵⁴ Richard H. Popkin, *The Third Force in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1992), pp. 206-7, 248, 278, 91; Richard H. Popkin, *The History of Scepticism: from Savonarola to Bayle*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960, 1979, 2003), pp. 176-7.

“next doore to madness or dotage” and impossible to debate with.¹⁵⁵ Gabbey elaborates that More’s axioms outline how we can only know things by our faculties, true philosophy and reason.¹⁵⁶ Like many earlier historians, Popkin cannot reconcile More’s “hard-core” philosophical mind with his “bizarre excursions into the occult, the mystical, and the incredible.” Oddly, Popkin credits Glanvill with recognising that the existence of evil spirits was a question of fact that could be proved with empirical evidence,¹⁵⁷ overlooking More’s prior work on the subject.

Popkin noted how More argued his metaphysical philosophy of extended spirit could explain all the new scientific discoveries from Copernicus’s heliocentrism to Harvey’s circulation of the blood, whereas the emergent mechanistic philosophy could not explain “why anything happens”.¹⁵⁸ Popkin acknowledges More’s sincere intention to apply reasonable criteria to empirically prove that spirits exist, in defence of angels and God, and to make biblical prophecy comprehensible and acceptable. However, Popkin describes More’s work as shifting from the “sublime to the ridiculous” with some “mind-boggling” sections on the supernatural that diminished More’s reputation among historians as “a gullible psychical researcher, and a silly Bible interpreter.”¹⁵⁹

Samuel I. Mintz describes More’s ‘rational theological’ counter-arguments against Hobbes’s ‘rational materialism’.¹⁶⁰ Scott Mandelbrote notes that More’s primary defence against atheism was natural theology, but only credits him as a proponent of the approach in which nature is managed by spirits.¹⁶¹ In fact More also endorsed providential “divine superintendence”, managed by the Spirit of Nature.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁵ Alan Gabbey, ‘A Disease Incurable: Scepticism and the Cambridge Platonists’, in Richard H. Popkin and Arjo Vanderjagt, eds., *Scepticism and Irreligion in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, New York, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1993), 71-91, pp. 84, 88-9; Hutton, ‘*The History of Scepticism*’, p. 52; Reid, *Metaphysics*, p. 28; Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, p. 125; see More, AA, I.ii p. 5.

¹⁵⁶ Gabbey, ‘Disease Incurable’, pp. 84, 88-9.

¹⁵⁷ Popkin, *Third Force*, pp. 112, 251.

¹⁵⁸ Richard H. Popkin, ‘The Spiritualistic Cosmologies of Henry More and Anne Conway’, in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 97-114, pp. 98, 105, 111.

¹⁵⁹ Popkin, ‘Spiritualistic Cosmologies’, pp. 101-2, 107, 111.

¹⁶⁰ Samuel I. Mintz, *The Hunting of Leviathan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 80-95.

¹⁶¹ Scott Mandelbrote, ‘The Uses of Natural Theology in Seventeenth-Century England’, *Science in Context*, 20:3 (2007), 451-80, pp. 451-2.

¹⁶² See chapter seven, pp. 224-8.

Rosalie L. Colie examines the correspondence between More and the Dutch Remonstrant theologian Philip van Limborch [1633-1712] including their concern for the appropriation of Cartesianism by atheists, More's Spirit of Nature, and the heterodox ideas of Spinoza, and notes that More was often cited in Holland as an authority against materialist philosophies.¹⁶³ Colie also published a couple of papers on the reception in England of the "extreme Hobbist" Spinoza and notes that More 'violently' objected to Spinoza's "impious confounding of nature with God, of substance with Spirit", accused him of being an enthusiast, and responded with his defence of miracles and 'rational' interpretation of the Bible.¹⁶⁴ Jacob argues that Colie is pro-Spinoza and does not study More's arguments systematically, and then presents his own detailed analysis of the philosophical connections to More's earlier works.¹⁶⁵ Luisa Simonutti also examines the More-Limborch exchange, noting that they discussed the importance of reason and toleration in religious debate and exchanged copies of their books.¹⁶⁶

As well as Fouke, other historians have examined More's targeting of Enthusiasm. Frederic B. Burnham explains More's objection against the perceived philosophical enthusiasm of Vaughan's Hermeticism. Burnham sees this as part of a wider Latitudinarian stance against the enthusiasm of mystical philosophy, which was a key stage in the revival of Baconian empirical philosophy, although Michael Heyd disagrees and suggests More's alternative was rational Platonism.¹⁶⁷ Noel Brann observes how More strove to negotiate a narrow path by denouncing both atheism and religious enthusiasm, and distinguishing between those that used the mystical Kabbalah for esoteric 'magical' and 'visionary' enthusiastic purposes (like Vaughan), and those who used it for sincere theology (like himself). Brann acknowledges that More's belief in witches and spirits was the "bedrock" of his

¹⁶³ Rosalie L. Colie, *Light and Enlightenment: A Study of the Cambridge Platonists and the Dutch Arminians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), pp. 7, 52-5, 73, 74-93, 94-116.

¹⁶⁴ Rosalie L. Colie, 'Spinoza and the Early English Deists', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 20:1 (1959), 23-46, p. 27; 'Spinoza in England, 1665-1730', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 107:3 (1963), 183-219, pp. 183, 185-6.

¹⁶⁵ Jacob, 'Introduction', in Jacob, ed., *Refutation of Spinoza*, p. xviiff.

¹⁶⁶ Luisa Simonutti, 'Reason and Toleration: Henry More and Philip van Limborch' in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 201-18.

¹⁶⁷ Frederic B. Burnham, 'The More-Vaughan Controversy: The Revolt Against Philosophical Enthusiasm', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35:1 (1974), 33-49, pp. 38, 48-9; Michael Heyd, 'The Reaction to Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth Century: Towards an Integrative Approach', *The Journal of Modern History*, 53:2 (1981), 258-80, p. 272.

theology, applying cases to explain the soul's immortality, independence from the body and their sympathetic connection via the Spirit of Nature.¹⁶⁸ Arlene Miller Guinsburg argues Vaughan's robust response to More forced him to carefully reconsider Vaughan's arguments, making him familiar with occultist sources and concepts, and he even adopted some that suited his interpretation of the *prisci theologi* (ancient truths), such as the Spirit of Nature, and definitions of *prima materia* (first matter).¹⁶⁹ Heyd notes that although More was concerned about enthusiasm and discredited it as a physiological melancholic imbalance, his "basic ambivalence" is evident in his own natural enthusiastic inclination and mystical interests.¹⁷⁰ Pocock observes the similarity between the 'Candle of the Lord', the spiritual guiding force of reason of the Cambridge Platonists, and the 'Inner Light', the conviction of Cromwell and the Quakers that the Holy Spirit was moving in them.¹⁷¹ Koen Vermeir has examined More's original theories of the imagination—such as the excess of imagination in atheists and enthusiasts and the interplay between reason, imagination and the physical body—and rejects Henry's suggestion that More was a "crypto-materialist".¹⁷²

Several historians have noted that More's initial Neoplatonic and Mosaic Cabbala of the 1650s was his personal interpretation and it was not until the 1670s that he finally studied the actual Lurianic Kabbalah. Allison Coudert concludes that More preferred his own version and studied Kabbalah seeking proof "that spiritual forces were responsible for material change".¹⁷³ Brian P. Copenhaver commented on More's interest in finding areas of "mutual understanding" to help convert Jews to

¹⁶⁸ Noel L. Brann, 'The Conflict between Reason and Magic in Seventeenth-Century England: A Case Study of the Vaughan-More Debate', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 43:2 (1980), 103-126, pp. 111-20.

¹⁶⁹ Arlene Miller Guinsburg, 'Henry More, Thomas Vaughan and the Late Renaissance Magical Tradition', *Ambix*, 27:1 (1980), 36-58.

¹⁷⁰ Michael Heyd, *"Be Sober and Reasonable": The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), pp. 92-108.

¹⁷¹ J. G. A. Pocock, 'Enthusiasm: The Antiself of Enlightenment', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 60:1/2 (1997), 7-28, p. 15

¹⁷² Koen Vermeir, 'Imagination between Physick and Philosophy: on the central role of Imagination in the work of Henry More', *Intellectual History Review*, 18:1 (2008), 119-37; see Henry, 'Cambridge Platonist's Materialism', p. 195.

¹⁷³ Allison Coudert, 'A Cambridge Platonist's Kabbalist Nightmare', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 36:4 (1975), 633-52, pp. 645-7; Allison Coudert, 'Henry More, Kabbalah, and Quakers' in Richard Kroll, Richard Ashcraft and Perez Zagorin, eds., *Philosophy, science, and religion in England 1640-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 31-67, p. 35.

Christianity, and any elements of ancient wisdom that supported his metaphysics.¹⁷⁴ Stuart Brown argues whilst there are similarities in the work of German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz [1646-1716], who had read some of More's work, it could be a coincidental convergence of ideas.¹⁷⁵ David S. Katz also notes that for all More's purported interest in Kabbalah, he did not make any effort to discuss it with Jews, unlike Cudworth and Boyle.¹⁷⁶ Mogens Laerke explains how Leibniz's challenge to More's critic, the German scholar Johann Georg Wachter [1663-1757], shows Leibniz and More agreed in opposing the Kabbalist conception of creation.¹⁷⁷

Interesting areas for research are More's own unorthodox ideas, such as Platonic and Origenist doctrines of the pre-existence of the soul and the Neoplatonic theory of soul vehicles, and his call for religious toleration and extreme free will. Christian Hengstermann examines Origenism among the Cambridge Platonists, noting More embraced pre-existence but not universal salvation.¹⁷⁸ D. P. Walker notes that although More publically endorsed the orthodox doctrine of eternal torment in hell, he did not rule out universal salvation.¹⁷⁹ Whilst More was relatively tolerant, Coudert observes he rejected both Quakerism and Kabbalah for their irrationality, enthusiasm and "sectarian spirit."¹⁸⁰ G. A. J. Rogers claims that whilst More was not very politically active, he was not "fundamentally apolitical", as Hall describes.¹⁸¹ Rogers explains More's political awareness was evident in his promotion of religious toleration and liberty of conscience by appealing to man's reason and free will.¹⁸²

One of More's most notable and less orthodox ideas was the Neoplatonic concept of the Spirit of Nature, and William B. Hunter and Robert A. Greene claim More was

¹⁷⁴ Brian P. Copenhaver, 'Jewish Theologies of Space in the Scientific Revolution: Henry More, Joseph Raphson, Isaac Newton and their Predecessors' in *Annals of Science*, 37 (1980), 489-548, p. 523.

¹⁷⁵ Stuart Brown, 'Leibniz and More's Cabbalistic Circle' in S Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 77-95, pp. 77, 81, 88 and 91.

¹⁷⁶ David S. Katz, 'Henry More and the Jews' in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 173-88, pp. 173-80, 185.

¹⁷⁷ Mogens Laerke, 'Three texts on the Kabbalah: More, Wachter, Leibniz, and the philosophy of the Hebrews', *BJHP*, 25:5 (2017), 1011-30.

¹⁷⁸ Christian Hengstermann, 'Pre-existence and universal salvation – the Origenian renaissance in early modern Cambridge', *BJHP*, 25:5 (2017), 971-89.

¹⁷⁹ D. P. Walker, *The Decline of Hell: Seventeenth Century Discussions of Eternal Torment* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 127, 132, 135.

¹⁸⁰ Coudert, 'Henry More, Kabbalah, and Quakers', pp. 58-9.

¹⁸¹ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 88.

¹⁸² G. A. J. Rogers, 'More, Locke and the Issue of Liberty' in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 189-99, p. 195; Rogers, 'The Other Worldly Philosophers', pp. 3-15.

the first to introduce the concept into seventeenth century metaphysics. Greene notes the theory appealed to Christian apologists concerned about potential atheistic concepts in the new natural philosophies of Descartes and Hobbes.¹⁸³ Boylan analyses the interrelationships between God, the Spirit of Nature and space in More's cosmological account.¹⁸⁴ John Henry addresses More's refutation of the monist philosophy of the physician Francis Glisson [1599-1677] based on concerns that it negated a role or need for immaterial spirit.¹⁸⁵ Greene's focus is More's appropriation of Boyle's experimental findings as proof for his theory, and Boyle's gentle, but firm, correction.¹⁸⁶ Boyle and More's purposes were fundamentally different, as Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer observe: Boyle's experiments were to establish matters of fact, whilst More sought to demonstrate spirit as the true cause of the effects.¹⁸⁷ John Henry evaluates Boyle's and More's contrasting theories of matter, which in turn reflected their "deeper disagreements about the nature of God and divine Providence".¹⁸⁸ Jane Jenkins suggests Boyle was stirred to refute More's theory of the Spirit of Nature for fear that it rendered God unnecessary.¹⁸⁹

More was the first English philosopher to write and teach the idea of infinite and absolute space and the infinity of worlds. Nicolson notes his "amazement" and "rapture" at the concepts.¹⁹⁰ J. E. Power argues More's concept of absolute space had "a marked influence" on Newton, although More's interest was theological whereas Newton's was purely philosophical.¹⁹¹ Hall concludes More's anti-

¹⁸³ William B. Hunter, Jr., 'The Seventeenth Century Doctrine of Plastic Nature', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 43:3 (1950), 197-213, p. 199; Robert A. Greene, 'Henry More and Robert Boyle on the Spirit of Nature', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 23:4 (1962), 451-74, p. 451.

¹⁸⁴ Michael Boylan, 'Henry More's Space and the Spirit of Nature' *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 18:4 (1980), 395-405.

¹⁸⁵ John Henry, 'Medicine and pneumatology: Henry More, Richard Baxter, and Francis Glisson's "Treatise on the energetic nature of substance"' *Medical History*, 31:1 (1987), 15-40.

¹⁸⁶ Greene, 'Spirit of Nature', pp. 461-74.

¹⁸⁷ Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle, and the Experimental Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 207-24.

¹⁸⁸ John Henry, 'Henry More versus Robert Boyle: The Spirit of Nature and the Nature of Providence' in Hutton, ed., *Henry More*, 55-76, p. 56.

¹⁸⁹ Jane E. Jenkins, 'Arguing about Nothing: Henry More and Robert Boyle on the Theological Implications of the Void', in Margaret J. Osler, ed., *Rethinking the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 153-79, pp. 155, 170.

¹⁹⁰ Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom*, pp. 114-40.

¹⁹¹ J. E. Power, 'Henry More and Isaac Newton on Absolute Space', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 31:2 (1970), 289-96.

Cartesianism was a key influence on Newton.¹⁹² John Henry criticises Hall for not engaging with More's theology and thus failing to see the differences between More's intellectualist or necessitarian theology and Newton's voluntarism. Henry is adamant that Newton's philosophy neither borrowed nor adapted anything from More.¹⁹³ However, Jasper Reid argues that Newton, Locke and other philosophers were influenced by More's ideas of divine absolute space, which developed gradually to its final form in *Divine Dialogues* (1668) as More came to believe that space was real and that God was extended.¹⁹⁴

Serge Hutin's book of essays covers topics including More's spiritual formation, morality, religion, divine space, and his influence on Newton's theories and Leibniz's monadology. He recognises More's purpose in collecting supernatural case material to prove the existence and activity of supernatural beings and the immortality of the soul in order to combat materialists and sceptics. He also praises More's prudence in rejecting absurd or clearly fabricated cases, accepting only biblical miracles on faith.¹⁹⁵ Hutin argues More's philosophy has been decried by historians of philosophy because of his mystical tendencies, credulity and strange metaphysical speculations.¹⁹⁶ Hutin himself has been criticised by Craig A. Staudenbaur for his "sins of editing, translation, and interpretation" and, in particular, Staudenbaur rejects Hutin's arguments that More acquired his philosophical principles from visions rather than from books.¹⁹⁷

More's theology and apocalyptic exegesis was influential: for example, Philip C. Almond and Sarah Hutton explain how More's interpretations of apocalyptic revelations served as proof for religion, God, spirits and the afterlife.¹⁹⁸ Almond notes the almost Baconian method of More's inter-textual structural analysis in his

¹⁹² Hall, 'Scientific Revolution', pp. 37-54.

¹⁹³ John Henry, "'Henry More: Magic, Religion and Experiment'", by A. Rupert Hall: Henry More and Newton's Gravity', *History of Science*, 31 (1993), 83-97, p. 95.

¹⁹⁴ Jasper Reid, 'The Evolution of Henry More's Theory of Divine Absolute Space', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 45:1 (2007), 79-102.

¹⁹⁵ Serge Hutin, *Henry More: Essai sur les doctrines théosophiques chez les Platoniciens de Cambridge* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966), pp. 142-5.

¹⁹⁶ Hutin, *Henry More*, p. 205.

¹⁹⁷ C. A. Staudenbaur, 'Platonism, Theosophy, and Immaterialism: Recent Views of the Cambridge Platonists', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 35:1 (1974), 157-69, pp. 169, 164.

¹⁹⁸ Philip C. Almond, 'Henry More and the Apocalypse', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 54:2 (1993), 189-200; Hutton, 'Apocalypse', pp. 131-40.

efforts to rehabilitate prophecy from radical millenarians and to defer the Apocalypse for a thousand years, but makes no mention of More's other objectives such as endorsing natural religion, the reformed church, and Jesus as the true messiah, or opposing atheists and the Church of Rome.¹⁹⁹ Additionally, Hutton notes that More explained that the prophecies of St John preached obedience rather than rebellion against the political order.²⁰⁰ Warren Johnston outlines how, contrary to the traditional historical view, apocalyptic exegesis continued after the restoration and, like Hutton, he emphasises how More appealed for peace and support of the monarchy and Church of England.²⁰¹ Rob Iliffe's careful research reveals that Newton discussed biblical prophecy with More and studiously read and annotated More's works.²⁰²

Finally, there are other studies on More such as Cecilia Muratori's examination of More's works concerning the role of animals, including animals as proofs of divine providence.²⁰³ Also, John Sellars's explores More's engagement with Stoicism in general and philosopher and Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius [121-180CE] in particular.²⁰⁴

At the conclusion of this review of the extensive secondary literature on More, it is evident that whilst historians have noted More's use of miraculous and supernatural phenomena and some have even commented on his purpose, there has not been a detailed examination of the cases themselves. Hall, Coudert and Crocker are the only historians that have given this topic any serious consideration, but all three have been brief and have focussed primarily on witchcraft and More's collaboration with Glanvill. Most often, historians have seemed reluctant to engage with this material at all, leaving it out of edited collections or dismissing More as credulous. Hall

¹⁹⁹ Almond, 'Apocalypse', pp. 193, 200. See also More, *AARJ*, 'The Preface to the Reader', pp. xvi-xxviii.

²⁰⁰ Hutton, 'Apocalypse', p. 140.

²⁰¹ Warren Johnston, 'The Anglican Apocalypse in Restoration England', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 55:3 (2004), 467-501; Warren Johnston, *Revelation Restored: the Apocalypse in later seventeenth-century England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), especially pp. 125-51, 191-6.

²⁰² Rob Iliffe, *Priest of Nature: The Religious Worlds of Isaac Newton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 219-21, 235-8, 254-9.

²⁰³ Cecilia Muratori, 'In human shape to become the very beast!' – Henry More on animals', *BJHP*, 25:5 (2017), 897-915.

²⁰⁴ John Sellars, 'Henry More as a reader of Marcus Aurelius', *BJHP*, 25:5 (2017), 916-31.

comments, “We may wish that More’s had been one of those rare minds that rejected the odious doctrine of witchcraft and distrusted (at least) the whole mythology of ghostly visitations, but that is a different matter. One might as well wish that Samuel Pepys could have consulted a modern ophthalmologist”.²⁰⁵ More’s miraculous and supernatural beliefs were normal in his lifetime, and only by attempting to understand his beliefs and his cognition and engaging with his voluminous case material will we be able to understand why his keen and enquiring mind was not as sceptical as others such as Hobbes.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis aims to explore ‘miraculous and supernatural effects’ in the works of More to fill some of these gaps in the historiography. Through revisionist history supplemented by an interdisciplinary psycho-historical approach, I will explore More’s cases of miraculous and supernatural effects in the context of their associated beliefs and metaphysical reasoning. More’s purpose was to extend natural theology by applying empirical evidence, rather than scripture alone, to challenge the growing trend of fashionable, coffee-house ‘wits’ that were sceptical and mocked traditional religious beliefs to a sometimes atheistic degree.²⁰⁶ There is also a lot to be learned from the cases themselves, especially concerning the contemporary metaphysical theories of miraculous and supernatural phenomena and the boundaries between the normal and the extraordinary, and the natural and the supernatural. More was convinced of the reality of spirits, perhaps due to some strange experiences of his own, and the majority of his works are concerned with defining, describing, rationalising, understanding and evidencing spirit. “These [...] extraordinary effects (which, if you please, you may call by one generall terme of *Apparitions*) seem to me to be an undeniable Argument, that there be such things as *Spirits* or *Incorporeall Substances* in the world”.²⁰⁷

More was a prolific author; he published on a range of subjects for a variety of reasons. Chapter two will therefore provide a summary of Henry More’s works,

²⁰⁵ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 143.

²⁰⁶ Hunter, *Occult Laboratory*, pp. 1 & 5-7.

²⁰⁷ More, *IS*, I.xiii p. 90.

including their purpose and content, situated within their historical and intellectual context. The literary agenda he pursued was shaped by diverse influences and he in turn was influential on others. Significant factors included the threats of atheism and enthusiasm, the rise of mechanistic natural philosophy, and the different interpretations of the biblical Apocalypse. In particular, chapter two will assess why More used miraculous and supernatural phenomena in his works on natural theology.

Chapter three will analyse More's methodology, investigating how he collected and presented cases of miraculous and supernatural phenomena. His works will be examined to determine which contained cases, what type of cases these were and for what purposes he used them. The sources will be analysed in terms of the range, the references given, and More's accuracy compared with the source. In addition, the issues of credulity, scepticism and the use of selection criteria will be explored.

Chapters four, five, six and seven will look in more detail at what the 'miraculous and supernatural effects' were from both contemporary and modern perspectives, with an evaluation of More's theories. Following an adaptation of MacDonald's model, I have grouped the cases by theme using More's own terminology for meaningful analysis, even though such terms are often laden with implied causation. MacDonald tabulated the frequency of symptom terms in Napier's medical case notes to determine clusters, independent of modern psychiatric syndromes.²⁰⁸ As MacDonald explained, to artificially separate the cases into modern categories brings precision, but those benefits are outweighed by the "perils of anachronism". Similarly, where modern parallels are discussed, I have tried to minimise any modern technical jargon.²⁰⁹ There are 763 cases of miraculous and supernatural phenomena in More's published works. Some longer stories comprise more than one case. What is defined as a "case" in this instance is an occurrence of something 'miraculous and supernatural', that is something More considered to be extraordinary or outside or at odds with the normal laws of nature.

²⁰⁸ MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. 115-6.

²⁰⁹ MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. xii-xiii.

Through examining More's interpretation in context, the underlying themes of the cases group together into four clusters:

- i. miracles, providence and prophecy;
- ii. independence and immortality of the incorporeal soul;
- iii. nature and powers of angels, demons and witches; and,
- iv. the Spirit of Nature and plastic power of the soul.

Chapter four will examine cases of miracles, visions, dreams, premonitions, inspired predictions and extraordinary events that were seen as evidence of providence and prophecy, including a section on 'false miracles' rejected by More. Chapter five will analyse examples of communication at a distance or after death that he selected to demonstrate the survival of the soul outside the physical body. Chapter six explores stories about angels, demons and witches that served to illustrate the nature and powers of supernatural beings. Chapter seven will review cases of natural wonders, delusions and physical mutations, such as foetal anomalies perceived to correlate with the mother's imaginative experiences during pregnancy, which were seen as examples of the plastic power of the soul and the Spirit of Nature.

In approaching these cases, I will endeavour to maintain a non-judgemental, objective analytical approach throughout, but with a sensitive consideration for the historical context. For the record, my personal motivation is historical and my bias is sceptically psychological. There is no robust evidence arising from centuries of research to indicate that the types of miraculous and supernatural effects More reported had any genuinely spiritual cause. In comparison, there is an abundance of natural causes, from psychological to environmental, that have been shown to demonstrate similar effects. My intention here is to explain, not explain away, More's miraculous and supernatural cases and his beliefs. As Thomas notes, early modern prophets should not be dismissed as "psychotics" or "victims of hallucination". He explains that "It is not enough to describe such men as lunatics. One has to explain why their lunacy took this particular form."²¹⁰ There is a fine line to walk in this type of enquiry in order to balance over-sensitivity to historical context against artificial anachronistic interpretations. I agree with Fouke's approach

²¹⁰ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 176-7.

to this balancing act. He explains, “In order to achieve historical understanding it is necessary to place the past into a meaningful relationship with the present, and this cannot be done by merely reproducing, under the guise of careful scholarship, the categories of subjects. Nor can it be achieved by reading the past through the lenses of our own categories, for this would be a refusal to learn from the past because of imperialistic confidence in the superiority of present culture. [...] There is no easy solution to this problem. [...] To merely construct a chronicle of events or to reiterate the sequence of expressions of historical actors is not to engage in history. To write history is to make use of organizing concepts which go beyond the “given” and which address current interests. History of any kind requires the construction of a narrative in which the past is rendered familiar.”²¹¹

For this reason, sections are included throughout to provide the reader with a basic level of understanding of current psychological theories concerning similar anomalous experiences and associated beliefs. Contemporaries were just as concerned as modern investigators about the inherent problems with reliability, accuracy and verification, as subjective experiences are vulnerable to interpretation, memory distortion and suffer from a lack of objective evidence. In this way I will explore More’s perception and interpretation of the miraculous and supernatural case material within his framework of belief and make use of modern psychological theories to help us understand what might have been happening in more depth.

Finally, in chapter eight we will revisit the research objectives and from this evaluation of More’s case material show what constituted miraculous and supernatural effects, experiences and beliefs in England during the early modern period. I shall summarise what form they took, how they were understood, and whether there was an equivalent notion of ‘paranormal’ between early modern and modern culture. Analysing exceptional human experiences gives us a better understanding of the totality of human experience. It also gives us a reflexive understanding of what was considered ‘normal’ and an understanding of where different individuals considered the boundaries of the natural and the supernatural to be.

²¹¹ Fouke, *Enthusiastical Concerns*, p. 10.

2 The Works of Henry More in their Intellectual Context

2.1 Overview

This chapter provides a summary of Henry More's published works in their intellectual context to establish the contemporary framework for the subsequent chapters on More's methods and case material concerning "miraculous and supernaturall effects". More published works frequently throughout his life (see Bibliography),¹ revealing his chief interests at different stages of his career as well as the detail of his philosophical and theological position on various matters. The diverse topics More tackled were not grouped in a convenient chronological sequence, therefore I have structured this chapter primarily by theme, with overlapping dates, in order to make this review comprehensible in the wider intellectual context. More published several versions of his collected works in 1662, 1675, and 1679, and they were posthumously re-issued in 1700, 1708 and 1712. For ease of reference, the editions of his major works published in these collected works are listed in Appendix 2. The significant changes between the editions with regard to cases of "miraculous and supernaturall effects" are evaluated in chapter three.

2.2 1642-7: Neoplatonism

The 'Cambridge Platonists' were a "loose coalition" of Cambridge divines and philosophers in the mid-seventeenth century who promoted Christian Platonism and the new natural philosophy, and rejected Scholasticism and dogmatic Calvinism.² At the core of this influential group were: the theologian, preacher and moral philosopher, Benjamin Whichcote [1609-1683], fellow at Emmanuel and later provost of King's College; Ralph Cudworth [1617-1688], one of Whichcote's former pupils, fellow at Emmanuel, Master of Clare College and Professor of Hebrew, and from 1654 Master of Christ's College; John Smith [1618-1652], another of

¹ I have excluded a short political pamphlet *Free-Parliament Quaeres: proposed to Tender Consciences; and published for the use of the Members now Elected*, published in 1660 under More's pseudonym Alazonomastix Philalethes, because there is no evidence it was actually written by him.

² Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. xvii-xviii.

Whichcote's former pupils, and fellow of Queen's College; and Henry More, the most prolific author of the group. The influence of the Cambridge Platonists extended through their publications, university teaching, preaching and their network of friendships and correspondents.³ At the periphery of the group were some of their pupils, for example: More's pupil and later fellow at Christ's, George Rust [1628-1670]; Rust's pupil, Henry Hallywell [1641-1703]; and admirers from Oxford, such as Joseph Glanvill [1636-1680], who regarded More as a "mentor" and "spiritual master".⁴

Key strands of Cambridge Platonist thought included: the harmony of faith and reason; the unity of revealed religion and natural theology; moral laws as fundamental principles rather than derivative concepts; the pursuit of moral discipline, purity of soul, and conduct to achieve godliness, liberty of conscience, and toleration; a philosophy of religion opposed to atheistic materialism and determinism; the immortality of the soul; the doctrine of plastic nature and the Spirit of Nature; and endorsement of natural history and the new science (though they were not serious experimentalists themselves).⁵ Whilst the Cambridge Platonists were 'devoted' to Plato, their interpretation was a Christianised Neo-Platonism derived primarily from the Greek philosopher Plotinus [204/5-270CE], Italian Neoplatonist Marsilio Ficino [1433-1499] and medieval mystics. For example they rejected Plato on the subject of grace, regarding it as an essential point of Christian faith.⁶

More wrote an autobiographical account for the 'Preface General' of his Latin collected works of 1679, translated in Richard Ward's biography, in which he explained how he developed his Christian Platonism. Whilst still a schoolboy, he reasoned against Calvinist predestination and rejected the family faith, and later argued for religious toleration and broad church Anglicanism. At university More studied Aristotle, the Italian polymath Girolamo Cardano [1501-1576], the Italian scholar and physician Julius Caesar Scaliger [1484-1558, 'Giulio Cesare della Scala'], and others in the pursuit of the "*Knowledge of Things*", but was dissatisfied,

³ Lewis, 'Educational Influence', passim & Lewis, *Educational Influence* (PhD Thesis), passim.

⁴ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. xvii-xviii.

⁵ Cragg, 'Introduction', *Cambridge Platonists*, pp. 16-29.

⁶ MacKinnon, 'Introduction', *Philosophical Writings*, p. xxvi; Patrides, *Cambridge Platonists*, pp. 21-3

finding their premises “so *false* or *uncertain*, or else so *obvious* and *trivial*”. More found more satisfaction when he read the Platonic philosophers, Ficino, Plotinus, and Hermes Mercurius Trismegistus (the purported author of the Hermetic corpus), and the *Theologia Germanica*,⁷ where a recurring theme was the “*Purification of the Soul*”. This approach resonated with More and brought him to “a most *Joyous* and *Lucid State of Mind*”, which he endeavoured to capture in his philosophical poems.⁸

More expressed this profound, personal and mystical epiphany through his poems “with no other Design, than... a private Record of the Sensations and Experiences of my own Soul”.⁹ The poems were subsequently published as *Psychodia platonica or A Platonicall Song of the Soul* (1642), and followed by *Democritus Platonissans, or, An essay upon the infinity of worlds out of Platonick principles* (1646), in which he endorsed the heliocentric model of Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus [1473-1543] and proposed the infinity of worlds.¹⁰ *Philosophicall Poems* (1647) incorporate both prior works with additions to the original verses and also some new poems, explanatory notes and heliocentric astronomical diagrams. Stylistically inspired by Edmund Spenser, especially the *The Faerie Queen* (1590),¹¹ the combined poems were an allegory of a spiritual journey, the life and nature of More’s rational and Christian Platonic concept of the soul, and opposition to Calvinist determinism, voluntarism and scholasticism.¹² In an unprecedented lengthy combination of Neoplatonic metaphysics and poetry,¹³ More drew on ideas from Plotinus, the pre-existency of the soul from Origen, the Copernician cosmos, and Ficino’s immortality of the soul, reflecting More’s attempts to trace the *prisca theologia*—the single ancient true theology. By including a quote on the title page, it suggests More was responding to the Epicurean poem *De rerum natura*, by the

⁷ The anonymous fourteenth-century mystical treatise, *Theologia Germanica*, was first printed in English in 1646. Whilst Luther had promoted it, both Calvin and the Roman Catholics were suspicious and rejected it, the latter adding it to the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* in 1612.

⁸ More, *OO*, ‘Praefatio generalissima’, vii-xi pp. v-viii; Translation by Ward in *Life*, especially pp. 5-16, 10, 12, 15.

⁹ More, *OO*, ‘Praefatio generalissima’, vii-xi pp. v-viii [Ward, *Life*, pp. 14-6].

¹⁰ Henry More, *Platonica: or A Platonicall Song of the Soul* (Cambridge: Roger Daniel, 1642); Henry More, *Democritus Platonissans, or, An essay upon the infinity of worlds out of Platonick principles* (Cambridge: Roger Daniel, 1646).

¹¹ More, *PP*, ‘The Epistle’ sig. A2-A2v.

¹² More, *PP*; Crocker, *Henry More*, p. 29.

¹³ See Jacob, ‘Analysis’ in *Platonick Song*, pp. 1-8, 17; Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, p. 313; Bullough, ‘Introduction’, *Philosophical Poems*, p. lxxvi.

Roman philosopher, Titus Lucretius Carus [c.99BCE - c.55BCE], which argued that all phenomena were natural and were developed by chance, not caused by supernatural agencies.¹⁴

The Præexistence of the Soul was one of the longer poems and was mostly a natural history of miraculous and supernatural effects with a short discussion of the pre-existence of the soul in the final twenty stanzas.¹⁵ More argued that because the soul was immortal and indivisible, it could not be created for each new baby from ‘parts’ of the parents’ souls, nor was it appropriate that God “must wait on lawlesse Venery” and create souls on an individual basis. Therefore More argued that God must have created all the souls at once at the Creation.¹⁶ To present a complete metaphysics, More had to account for how souls could exist before birth (pre-exist) and survive independently after the mortal death of the physical body, hence the importance of examples of spirit phenomena as supporting evidence.

2.3 1648-64: Letters to Descartes and V.C.

More’s first reference to René Descartes was in *Democritus Platonissans* (1646), in which he quoted from *Principia philosophiae* (1644) stressing the infinity of God’s power and goodness.¹⁷ More played a key role in introducing and promoting Descartes’s philosophical ideas in England by teaching them at Cambridge, encouraging all schools and universities to do likewise, and generally praising Descartes’s physics in his early works.¹⁸ In particular, More took notice of Descartes’s ideas on infinity, his innate ideas of God and his literary method.¹⁹ More thought Descartes represented the ideal modern philosopher and he kept his portrait

¹⁴ “*Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fontes*”, meaning “I wander afield, thriving in sturdy thought, / through unpathed haunts of the Pierides [muses], / trodden by step of none before. I joy / to come on undefiled fountains there, / [to drain them deep.]” More, *PP*, title page. From Titus Lucretius Carus, *De rerum natura [On the Nature of Things]*, translated by William Ellery Leonard (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1916), I ‘The Infinity of the Universe’. See also Stephen R. L. Clark, ‘Ancient Philosophy’ in Anthony Kenny, ed., *The Oxford Illustrated History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 1-53, p. 42.

¹⁵ More, *PP (PS)*, pp. 255-281.

¹⁶ More, *PP (PS)*, pp. 276-8.

¹⁷ More, *Democritus Platonissans*, ‘To the Reader’, sig. A4v. From René Descartes, *Principia philosophiae* (Amsterdam: 1644), III.i-ii pp. 70-1 [*Principles of Philosophy*, translated by Valentine Rodger Miller & Reese P. Miller (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1983, 1991), p. 84].

¹⁸ For example, see More, *SLA*, p. 41 and More, *IS*, ‘Preface’, sig. b7v-b8.

¹⁹ Nicolson, ‘Cartesianism’, pp. 361-73.

in his chamber.²⁰ However, More was not a Cartesian. More disagreed with some of Descartes's ideas, such as animal automatism, and foresaw how atheism could flourish in a mechanistic universe.²¹ Earlier scholars have misinterpreted More's enthusiasm and respect for Descartes as "almost abject discipleship" and were thus confused by his later opposition. More didn't change his mind, but rather changed his focus towards a more theological orientation, requiring a clear distance from materialistic philosophy.²²

Samuel Hartlib, seconded by Cudworth, encouraged and arranged More's correspondence with Descartes, which Gabbey describes as "one of the more significant sets of objections and replies in seventeenth-century philosophy".²³ More's first letters were dated 11th December 1648 and 5th March 1649, to which Descartes replied in February and April 1649. More wrote again in July and October 1649, however Descartes died on 11th February 1650. Descartes's editor, Claude Clerselier, found two pages of a draft third reply among his papers and corresponded with More from April 1655 before publishing the draft in *Lettres de Mr. Descartes* (1657).²⁴ More also published the Descartes correspondence in his collected works (1662) and added supplemental notes to the 1679 edition. He also wrote the *Epistola ad V.C.* (1662) to help clarify Cartesian philosophy and try to clear Descartes "from that giddy and groundless suspicion of Atheism".²⁵ More was not wholly successful and later had to publicly distance himself and his philosophy from Descartes.

²⁰ Henry More to Anne Conway, 29th May 1671, *Conway Letters*, p. 334.

²¹ Cohen, 'Descartes', pp. 48-61; Saveson, 'Differing Reactions', pp. 560-1, 567.

²² Nicolson, 'Cartesianism', p. 363; Gabbey, 'Philosophia Cartesiana Triumphata', pp. 171-2, 195.

²³ Henry More To ?, 27 November 1648, Ref 18/1/1A (University of Sheffield, 2008)

[http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/hartlib/view?file=main/18A_01_01, last accessed 14th January 2015].

This letter is partially transcribed in Webster, 'New Sources', p. 364. Gabbey, 'Limits of mechanism', p. 21; Gabbey, 'Philosophia Cartesiana Triumphata', pp. 192-3.

²⁴ Gabbey, 'Philosophia Cartesiana Triumphata', pp. 197-8, 206.

²⁵ More, *CSPW* (1662), 'Preface General', pp. xi-xii. More, 'Henrici Mori Epistolae Quatuor ad Renatum Descartes' & 'Epistola H. Mori ad V.C.' in *CSPW* (1662), pp. 53-133 & *OO*, pp. 227-71 & 105-29. Greene ['Spirit of Nature', p. 461] suggested V.C. stood for Viscountess Conway, but I am indebted to Professor Alan Gabbey for confirming to me at the 2014 Henry More Conference in London that More never explained or left any other clues indicating who V.C. was supposed to be and that, in all probability, it was just a literary device.

2.4 1650-6: Enthusiasm and Thomas Vaughan

In 1650, More published his scathing *Observations upon Anthroposophia Theomagica, and Anima Magica Abscondita* (1650) under the pseudonym ‘Alazonomastix Philalethes’ in reaction to what he saw as “immorality and foolery” in Thomas Vaughan’s recent tracts on hermetic philosophy published under the pseudonym ‘Eugenius Philalethes’ [‘well born lover of the truth’].²⁶ More considered Vaughan’s work to be the result of his magical and philosophical enthusiasm, evident in his “vanity” and “preposterous and fortuitous imaginations”, in contrast to More’s own “sober”, scholarly, and divine philosophy that was guided “cautiously in the light of a purified minde and improved reason.”²⁷

The polemic continued as Vaughan published *Magia Adamica*, issued with *The Man-Mouse Taken in a Trap, and tortur’d to death for gnawing the Margins of Eugenius Philalethes* in 1650, and More responded with *The second lash of Alazonomastix, laid on in mercie upon that stubborn youth Eugenius Philalethes: or a Sober Reply to a very uncivill Answer to certain Observations upon Anthroposophia Theomagica and Anima magica abscondita* in 1651.²⁸ The titles alone indicate that the exchange was an ugly one, with the authors attacking each other with belligerent point-by-point critiques. More claimed he responded to defend Vaughan’s “rash and unworthy abuse of *DesCartes* [...] more then any personall regard”.²⁹ However, he was also concerned that Vaughan’s alchemical and magical notions might taint the ideas they shared, such as Platonic concepts and the pre-existence of the soul, and thus readers might dismiss them all as “the fruit of juvenile distemper and intoxicating heat.”³⁰ Vaughan promptly published *Lumen de lumine*, together with *The Second Wash, or, The Moore Scour’d once more being a Charitable Cure for the Distractions of Alazonomastix* in 1651, but More did not respond, possibly because Vaughan’s jibe that More was as irrational as the raving enthusiasts he campaigned

²⁶ Thomas Vaughan, *Anthroposophia Theomagica* (London: T.W. for H. Blunden, 1650); Thomas Vaughan, *Anima Magica Abscondita* (London: T.W. for H.B., 1650); More, *OAT*, Sig. A4.

²⁷ More, *OAT*, Sig. A4.

²⁸ Thomas Vaughan, *Magia Adamica* (London: T.W. for H. Blunden, 1650) issued with Thomas Vaughan, *The Man-Mouse Taken in a Trap, and tortur’d to death for gnawing the Margins of Eugenius Philalethes* (London: 1650); More, *SLA*.

²⁹ More, *SLA*, p. 41.

³⁰ More, *SLA*, p. 36.

against was quite close to the mark.³¹ Hutton notes that More never used the “lampooning name-calling style” again,³² but he did later revert to personal insults against his critics as we shall see.³³

More returned to the subject of enthusiasm in 1656, publishing a brief discourse *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* under the pseudonym ‘Philophilus Parresiastes’, prefixed to reprints of the *Observations* and *The Second Lash*, and a new ‘Letter to a private Friend’ by ‘Alazonomastix’. In “To the Reader”, Philophilus and Alazonomastix discuss how to improve the latter’s previous works, and distance them further from Vaughan’s, by prefixing them with a more measured and sober argument.³⁴ ‘A Discourse of The *Nature, Causes, Kinds, and Cure*, of Enthusiasme’ was structured into sixty-four points, each tackling a specific subject such as the power of the imagination and melancholy. More described enthusiasm as a natural “disease” or “distemper”—a medical analogy he also used in *An Antidote against Atheism* (1653) for both enthusiasts and atheists. He sought to uphold the Christian religion by highlighting the “dazeling and glorious plausibilities of bold *Enthusiasts*” thus limiting “the ill influence of it upon the credulous and inconsiderate [...] the weak and unskilfull multitude”³⁵

All subsequent editions of *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* in the collected works included only the ‘Discourse’. In the second edition of 1662, More replaced one section with the first three paragraphs from the Preface of *An Antidote against Atheism*, discussing how atheism and enthusiasm fed each other, and added three further points (LIX, LX, and LXVII). In 1679 he added extra material in ‘Scholia’ (explanatory notes), including a summary of his discussion with Robert Boyle concerning the apparent healing powers of Valentine Greatrakes.³⁶

³¹ Thomas Vaughan, *Lumen de Lumine* (London: H. Blunden, 1651); Thomas Vaughan, *The Second Wash, or, The Moore Scour’d once more being a Charitable Cure for the Distractions of Alazonomastix* (London: T.W., 1651), passim; Crocker, *Henry More*, p. 53.

³² Hutton, ‘More’, *ODNB*.

³³ See chapter two, pp. 82 & 92.

³⁴ More, *ET*, ‘To the Reader’, sig. A2-A6v.

³⁵ More, *ET*, p. 1.

³⁶ More, *ET*, 3rd edition in *OO*, ‘Scholia’, lviii pp. 223-4 [*CSPW* (1712), pp. 51-3].

2.5 1652-3: Scripture and Science

In 1653, More published *Conjectura Cabbalistica*, dedicated to his friend, the Cambridge Professor of Hebrew, Ralph Cudworth. Despite the title, More's Christian apologetic 'cabbala' (which he understood to mean divinely received doctrine) had "as little to do with the Jews as did [...] the Jews' Harp".³⁷ More made no effort to learn from Jews or attain competence in Hebrew, and he did not even see a copy of the *Zohar*, the central text of Kabbalah, until 1671.³⁸ More's 'cabbala' was structured in two sections. The first was a 'conjectural essay' comprising the 'Literal Cabbala' (the first three books of Genesis) received by Moses from God, the 'Philosophical Cabbala' of Moses (*prisca theologia*) brought out of Egypt by Pythagoras and Plato that could be shown to align with the phenomena of nature, and the 'Moral Cabbala', which was an expansion of the "Moral and Spiritual Truth".³⁹ More's exegetical method adopted the first three of four levels (literal, physical, ethical and mystical) of biblical interpretation employed by Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria [c.20BCE - 40CE] but is actually closer to Origen's tripartite method (literal = body, spiritual = soul, and moral = spirit) in which literal meanings veil the spiritual meaning.⁴⁰ More was concerned atheists too readily dismissed Genesis as nonsense and so endeavoured to explain the different levels of meaning. The second section, 'The Defence', employed an 'accommodationist' approach in order to syncretize scripture with aspects of Pythagorean, Platonic and Cartesian philosophy, arguing that Genesis was rational and philosophy was not impious or irreligious.⁴¹ More claimed "the *Mosaical Theory*" and "the power of working Miracles" had been passed to Pythagoras as it had to Moses and other prophets.⁴²

In the second edition (1662), More made some additions, such as a comment that water nymphs might represent the spiritual beings in their terrestrial vehicles at the

³⁷ Katz, 'Jews', pp. 179-80.

³⁸ Lichtenstein, *More*, p. 14-5; Katz, 'Jews', pp. 178-80, 185.

³⁹ More, CC, 'Preface', sig. A6-A7, B1-B1v.

⁴⁰ Hutton, 'Inconisms', p. 204.

⁴¹ More, CC, 'Preface', sig. B2v and 'The Defence of the Threefold Cabbala', i p. 137. See Levitin *Ancient Wisdom*, p. 131.

⁴² More, CC, 'The Defence of the Threefold Cabbala', iii p. 186.

stage of generation.⁴³ The latter part of ‘The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’ was restructured into part of a new ‘Appendix to the Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’ with twelve chapters mostly addressing objections arising from the first edition. In the first chapter he tenuously claimed that Democritean theories, including atomism and the infinity of worlds, were derived from Pythagorean philosophy in order to assert that all Cartesianism was in Pythagoras, who in turn had taken it all from Mosaical philosophy.⁴⁴ In the sixth chapter More responded to the objection that Moses had not mentioned the motion of the Earth, with the weak but incontestable argument that it was not in what remained of Genesis, i.e. it might have been mentioned in it originally.⁴⁵ The third edition (1679) included Scholia in ‘Triplicis Cabbalae Defensio’ that provided clarifications and cross references to his own and other relevant works.

Unlike other similar Kabbalistic writers, Hermes Trismegistus was not mentioned in *Conjectura Cabbalistica* because More acknowledged the revised dating of the Hermetic corpus by the classical scholar Isaac Casaubon [1559-1614]. Thus More concluded the pre-existence of the soul was an ancient notion of “Egyptian wisdom”, but no longer regarded Hermes Trismegistus as a true *priscus theologus*.⁴⁶ Yates suggests this disregard for the Hermetic corpus kept magical theory and practice from intertwining with More’s Platonic theology (unlike many other Neo-Platonists) and instead he supported his theology with contemporary philosophies such as Cartesianism.⁴⁷

2.6 1652-5: Natural theology and the threat of Atheism

More wrote *An Antidote against Atheism* (1653) in response to a perceived threat of atheism, but historians have questioned how real the threat actually was. There had been atheists in Classical times, such as Lucretius, but the Latin (and English) term

⁴³ More, CC, 2nd edition in CSPW (1662), ‘The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’, i pp. 77-8.

⁴⁴ More, CC, 2nd edition in CSPW (1662), ‘An Appendix to the Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’, i pp. 103-4. See Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, p. 137.

⁴⁵ More, CC, 2nd edition in CSPW (1662), ‘Appendix’, vi pp. 126-7.

⁴⁶ Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 423-4. For example, Yates explains that the Paracelsian physician Robert Fludd [1574-1637] gave Hermes Trismegistus an equal authority to Moses.

⁴⁷ Yates, *Giordano Bruno*, pp. 425-7.

‘atheist’ was only coined in the sixteenth century.⁴⁸ Kors argues there were no true atheists until the eighteenth century and atheism was an invention of theologians to serve as a polemical device.⁴⁹ There were only a few isolated atheism cases in early modern records. ‘Atheists’ rarely denied the existence of God, but rather this pejorative term was used to mean ‘godless’ in a broad sense, and applied to anyone blasphemous, critical of Christianity or who behaved in an immoral (un-Christian) manner.⁵⁰ Theological unity and consensus was widely thought to be the foundation for society, law and order.⁵¹ Hunter argues that the anxiety around atheism provides a useful source of historical insight into the reaction of the godly to an ideological challenge to the status quo represented by a rising secularisation of society, which we can glimpse through elusive oral culture in form of the scoffing coffee-house wits.⁵²

More was concerned that the emerging mechanistic and materialistic philosophies, particularly in Hobbes’s *Leviathan* (1651), had a corrupting influence on Christian belief. Hobbes argued the term ‘incorporeal substance’, used by More and others to describe spirits, was a contradiction—everything was either a material thing or just a concept. Hobbes explained that if spirit (whether soul, ghost, angel or demon) was incorporeal, it had no substance or dimensions and no place, i.e. it was nowhere and it did not exist.⁵³ Many historians consider More’s *An Antidote against Atheism* one of the earliest responses to Hobbes.⁵⁴ I agree it seems unlikely More had not read *Leviathan* by 1653, but it should be noted that More did not mention Hobbes in print until *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), in which Hobbes was explicitly mentioned and his specific arguments addressed.

⁴⁸ David Wootton, ‘New Histories of Atheism’ in Michael Hunter & David Wootton, eds., *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p. 25.

⁴⁹ Alan Charles Kors, *Atheism in France, 1650-1729, Volume I: The Orthodox Sources of Disbelief* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), pp. 17-43; see also review in Wootton, ‘New Histories’, p. 21-2, 33.

⁵⁰ E.g. Christopher Marlowe in 1593, Sir Walter Raleigh in 1594. See Michael Hunter, ‘The Problem of ‘Atheism’ in Early Modern England’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 35 (1985), pp. 136-40; Wootton, ‘New Histories’, pp. 27-8.

⁵¹ Michael Hunter, *Science and Society in Restoration England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), pp. 162-4.

⁵² Hunter, ‘Atheism’, pp. 144-7 & Michael Hunter, *Science and the Shape of Orthodoxy: Intellectual Change in Late Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1995), pp. 231-7.

⁵³ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or, The matter, forme, and power of a common wealth, ecclesiasticall and civil* (London: Andrew Crouke, 1651), xxxiv pp. 210-4.

⁵⁴ For example, see Nicolson, *Mountain Gloom*, p. 117, Mintz, *Hunting of Leviathan*, p. 84 and Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 118-9. In contrast, Reid argues there is no evidence that More was responding to Hobbes. See Reid, *Metaphysics*, pp. 168-9 and note 106.

More dedicated *An Antidote against Atheism* to his patroness and tutee, Lady Anne Conway. He juxtaposed atheism and enthusiasm, considering both as derived from faulty reasoning; atheists reasoned there was no God, and the enthusiasts disregarded reason altogether in favour of imagination. More's 'antidote' for the corrupting disease or poison of atheism was "this carefull *Draught of Natural Theology or Metaphysicks*".⁵⁵ The 'Antidote' combined theology and philosophy in "An Appeal to the Natural Faculties of the Minde of Man, whether there be not a God". More recognised an atheist or materialist had already rejected scripture, and therefore his argument was founded instead on the common language of rational thought and sensory evidence; "hee that converses with a Barbarian, must discourse to him in his own language".⁵⁶

More structured *An Antidote against Atheism* into three books representing the different layers of his argument. Book I set out incremental logical reasoning, from first metaphysical and philosophical principles and definitions, to argue there is an incorporeal soul that must have been created by one good infinite God. Book II contained More's observations of nature as evidence of divine providence and the existence of God, from seeds and signatures of plants, to the concept of beauty (an intellectual, and therefore not accidental, principle), arguing how even the moon and the earth could not hold their courses, rotations and inclinations in perpetual motion without constant supervision from God. Book III detailed miraculous and supernatural effects as proof of supernatural agency and thus the existence of God. It is interesting to note that he included cases from heterodox and controversial authors, such as the Italian physician-philosophers Cardano and Lucilio Vanini [1585-1619].

More made some revisions in the second edition (1655) including the addition of three new chapters in the middle of Book III comprising compound cases of witchcraft and ghosts. He also added a lengthy appendix in which he defended and clarified his original argument against objections or counter-challenged the objection

⁵⁵ More, AA, Title page, 'Epistle Dedicatorie', sig. :2r-v, 'Preface' sig. A1v.

⁵⁶ More, AA, 'Preface' sig. B3-B4.

itself.⁵⁷ The third edition (1662) included a little more additional material, including a discussion on some of Boyle's recently published experiments and the effects of gravity that More argued proved the existence of the Spirit of Nature.⁵⁸ The fourth edition (1679) included Scholia that provided extra details on More's rationale and additional points he deemed relevant.

More was among the very first to publish in English an apologist natural theology combining argument from design with evidence from nature and his approach was influential in the second half of the seventeenth century.⁵⁹ In comparison, the 1652 natural theology of physician and natural philosopher Dr. Walter Charleton [1620-1707] contained primarily philosophical arguments against Classical atheist hypotheses, backed occasionally by general statements but lacked specific evidence, and seems to have had little impact.⁶⁰

Natural theology, the philosophical argument from design to prove God exists, was first developed by Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and was endorsed by the Italian Scholastic theologian Saint Thomas Aquinas [c.1225-1274] as the fifth of his "quinque viae".⁶¹ Mandelbrote describes how natural theology developed in two directions with early modern 'new science': the first stressed the providential, law-abiding universe as evidence of divine superintendence, epitomised by Newton's physics; the second emphasised the wonders of nature that required the constant and creative activity of spiritual agents. Mandelbrote proposes More as a proponent of the latter approach, which declined as miraculous and supernatural cases were

⁵⁷ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.vii-ix pp. 190-227 & 'Appendix' pp. 291-398.

⁵⁸ More, AA, 3rd edition in CSPW (1662), II.ii.vii-xiii pp. 43-6. From Robert Boyle, *New experiments physico-mechanicall, touching the spring of the air, and its effects*, (Oxford: H: Hall for Tho: Robinson, 1660) [Michael Hunter & Edward B. Davis, eds., *The Works of Robert Boyle* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999-2000), 10 vols., vol. I, pp. 141-301].

⁵⁹ H. R. McAdoo, *The Spirit of Anglicanism: A Survey of Anglican Theological Method in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1965), pp. 108-11; Henry, 'Cambridge Platonist's Materialism', p. 172, note 2.

⁶⁰ One of Charleton's very few examples was the providence of the Sun's position in relation to Earth, but unlike More, Charleton still maintained it was the Sun (not the Earth) that moved. Compare Walter Charleton, *The darknes of atheism dispelled by the light of nature a physico-theologicall treatise* (London: J. F. for William Lee, 1652), ii pp. 57-60; More, AA, II.ii pp. 47-52

⁶¹ See Plato, *Timaeus* in *The Dialogues of Plato*, translated by Benjamin Jowett, 3rd edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1892), 5 vols., Vol. III and the 'Five Ways' in Saint Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologica*, I Q. 2 Article 3, translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (New York: Benziger Bros., 1947-48).

increasingly discredited.⁶² I would argue that More pioneered both approaches to natural theology in *An Antidote against Atheism*, the former in Book II and the latter in Book III. The first type of natural theology was emulated by naturalist and theologian John Ray [1627-1705] in *The Wisdom of God* (1691) and by classical scholar Richard Bentley [1662-1742] in his first ‘Boyle Lectures’ in 1692.⁶³ For the second type that placed a greater stress on apparitions, spirits and witchcraft, More’s approach was continued by Glanvill, Sinclair, and Baxter,⁶⁴ although this supernaturalist approach fell rapidly into decline as the eighteenth-century progressed.⁶⁵

2.7 1659-62: Incorporeal Substance

In *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), dedicated to Lord Viscount Edward Conway, More continued to provide arguments and evidence for theism through “the Knowledge of Nature and the Light of Reason” “*unassisted and unguided by any miraculous Revelation.*”⁶⁶ In particular, More’s intention was to explicitly answer Hobbes’s claims that angels and spirits were corporeal and the soul was mortal.⁶⁷ According to Hartlib and Worthington, the book was generally well received, despite concerns from some that it was not sufficiently Christian.⁶⁸

More structured *The Immortality of the Soul* into three books with ‘axioms’ establishing his position through incremental statements. Book I was primarily a

⁶² Mandelbrote, ‘Natural Theology’, pp. 451-2.

⁶³ John Ray, *The Wisdom of God manifested in the works of the Creation* (London: Samuel Smith, 1691), see especially ‘Preface’, sig. A5; Richard Bentley, *The Folly and Unreasonableness of Atheism demonstrated from the Advantage and Pleasure of a Religious Life, the Faculties of Human Souls, the Structure of Animate Bodies, & the Origin and Frame of the World* (London: J. H. for H. Mortlock, 1692, 1693).

⁶⁴ Joseph Glanvill, *A blow at modern Sadducism in some philosophical considerations about witchcraft* (London: E. C. for James Collins, 1668); Glanvill, *ST*; George Sinclair, *Satan’s invisible world discovered* (Edinburgh: John Reid, 1685); Richard Baxter, *The certainty of the worlds of spirits and, consequently, of the immortality of souls* (London: T. Parkhurst and J. Salisbury, 1691).

⁶⁵ See Michael Hunter, *The Decline of Magic: Britain in the Enlightenment*, (Yale University Press, forthcoming), passim but especially ‘Conclusion: The ‘Decline of Magic Reconsidered’, pp. 167-80.

⁶⁶ More, *IS*, title page & ‘Preface’, sig. a4.

⁶⁷ More, *IS*, ‘Preface’, sig. a7-a7v. From Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xxxiv pp. 211-4 & xlv 344.

⁶⁸ Samuel Hartlib to John Worthington, 20 April 1659, Ref Additional Material/WORTH/5 (University of Sheffield, 2008) [http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/hartlib/view?file=additional/WORTH_05, last accessed 14th January 2015]. This letter is partially transcribed in Jacob, ‘Introduction’ in Jacob, ed., *IS* (1987), pp. xliii; see also pp. xliii-xlv.

refutation of Hobbes containing nineteen axioms setting out how incorporeal substances can exist and how we can know of them. Hobbes and Descartes claimed the difference between matter and spirit was extension, but More argued that both were extended and the key distinguishing properties were actually penetrability and discernibility (capability to be divided). Thus matter was impenetrable and discernible, and spirit was penetrable but indiscernible.⁶⁹ More agreed with Hobbes that the “Scholastick Riddle” declaring a person’s soul was ‘*tota in toto and tota in qualibet parte corporis*’ [‘the whole soul in the whole body and the whole soul in each part of the body’] was “profound Nonsense”.⁷⁰

In Book II, More discussed the nature of the soul including: how the soul was distinct from the body; memory, perception and sensori-motor functions (via animal spirits); and the pre-existence of the soul. More’s reasoning was ‘necessitarian’: if God was good and just, God must have created the best possible world, thus undeserved human pain and suffering must be rewarded by an afterlife in paradise and the wicked who “died in peace on their beds” must suffer eternal torment in hell.⁷¹ To survive mortal death was a miraculous property of spirits, confirming souls could only have been created by God. In Book III, More examined the soul after the death of the body, and put forward his argument that the soul was immortal, incorporeal, aerial and finally aethereal.⁷²

In the second edition of 1662, More added material dealing with ‘Divine Matter’ and motion in matter. He also elaborated on the instincts of birds and animals in making nests, webs and executing transformations (e.g. the silk worm into the butterfly) that he argued was evidence of divine providence through the Spirit of Nature and contrary to the automata theory of Descartes.⁷³ The 1679 edition included further Notes and Scholia addressing queries and clarifying prior points. For example More cautioned that the reading of Descartes’s work, that he had previously encouraged, must be done with “Faithfulness and Care” to be “sensible of its notorious Defects”

⁶⁹ More, *IS*, I.ii pp. 11-2.

⁷⁰ More, *IS*, I.x p. 73. See also Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xlv p. 373.

⁷¹ More, *IS*, II.xviii pp. 318-20.

⁷² More, *IS*, III.i p. 332.

⁷³ More, *IS*, 2nd edition in *CSPW* (1662), e.g. I.xi.viii p. 47, II.i.iii-iv pp. 59-61, III.xiii.ix-x pp. 200-4.

and if read with “lazy and stupid admiration”, it would “contribute more to Atheism, and the Contempt of Religion, than to any solid knowledge of God or Nature.”⁷⁴

As More’s philosophy developed away from both Descartes’s dualism and Hobbes’s materialism, he not only attributed all activity in living things to the soul, but all motion, power and action at a distance in the universe, for example gravity, magnetism, sympathetic effects and even foetal anomalies, to the ‘Spirit of Nature’. This concept derived from the Platonic ‘World Soul’ and was similar to Cudworth’s ‘Plastick Nature’; indeed More used all three terms in his works. More described the Spirit of Nature as an incorporeal substance exerting a “*plastical power*” and directing “*the parts of the Matter and their Motion*”.⁷⁵ Whilst mechanists proposed the corpuscles that comprised matter had inherent elasticity, More insisted matter itself was inert and lifeless and all motion and self-activity was evidence of spirit in living things and the Spirit of Nature in everything.⁷⁶ In the Preface General of *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings* (1662), More explained that his purpose was to build an “*exteriour Fortification about Theologie [...] against all the assaults of the confident Atheist*”.⁷⁷ The metaphor was of a battle; or more precisely, a siege of belief under attack by unbelief, with More as a defending champion.

2.8 1660-5: Christian Apology & Anglican Attacks

An Explanation of the grand Mystery of Godliness (1660) was More’s personal statement of theology and a call for religious toleration. The book was designed to demonstrate “*the Reasonableness and important Usefulness of Christian Religion in the Historical sense thereof, and in reference to the very Person of Christ our Saviour*” by explaining the four primary properties of the mystery of Christian godliness as More defined them: obscurity, intelligibleness, truth and usefulness.⁷⁸ He hoped that the *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, combined with *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, would abolish the “*Fanatick disease*” of enthusiasm. More particularly

⁷⁴ More, *IS*, 3rd edition in *OO*, ‘Preface - Scholia’, p. 289 [*CSPW* (1712), p. xvi].

⁷⁵ More, *IS*, III.xii pp. 450-8; Hutton, ‘Introduction to the Renaissance and seventeenth century’, pp. 73-4.

⁷⁶ More, *IS*, I.vii p. 42-3.

⁷⁷ More, *CSPW* (1662), ‘Preface General’, pp. iv & vi.

⁷⁸ More, *GMG*, ‘To the Reader’, p. vi. & I.i p. 1.

targeted Familists, a mystical sect founded on the continent about 1540 by the self-styled prophet Hendrik Niclaes [1501-1580], who believed the perfecting of the spirit should take preference over scripture, denied the doctrine of the Trinity, and rejected infant baptism.⁷⁹ In England, Niclaes's texts were popular with Quakers, Ranters and Seekers—all groups More regarded as enthusiasts.⁸⁰ More sought to clarify the balance in biblical interpretation between mystical metaphor and historical fact. For example, he concluded the resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgement was “only Prophetical and Symbolical” (the souls rise again, but not necessarily in the same flesh, just as one might change one's clothes without changing one's self), and he argued the Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension were to be interpreted literally, not allegorically as the Familists believed.⁸¹

The *Grand Mystery of Godliness* was a comprehensive work divided into ten books. Book I attempted to syncretize the Old Testament and Pythagorean and Platonic philosophies. Book II set out fourteen assertions concerning Christianity, such as the existence of immaterial spirits and the immortality of the soul, followed by an examination of the differences between animal life (senses and passions), middle life (reason and rational powers) and divine life (obedient faith in God). In Book III More related accounts of the ‘debauched’ and ‘cruel’ practices of pagans in ancient times and the New World to demonstrate the dominion of “the old Serpent” over the heathen.⁸² Book IV contrasted the extraordinary and divine miracles of Jesus Christ with the remarkable cases—possibly of demonic agency—attributed to pagans, principally the first century Pythagorean and Sophist teacher and magician, Apollonius of Tyana.⁸³ Book V compared the miraculous and supernatural effects of Jesus Christ and his Apostles with those performed by pagans such as Apollonius and Muhammad [c.570-632], the Arabian prophet of Islam.

In the last chapters of Book V More reviewed the interpretations of apocalyptic prophecies by one of his former Cambridge tutors, the biblical scholar Joseph Mede [1586-1639], and the Dutch philosopher and theologian, Hugo Grotius [Huig de

⁷⁹ More, *GMG*, ‘To the Reader’, p. xv.

⁸⁰ Hutton, ‘Jacob Boehme’, p. 148.

⁸¹ More, *GMG*, VI.iii p. 224 & VI.xiii p. 252.

⁸² More, *GMG*, III.ix p. 77.

⁸³ More, *GMG*, IV.iii p. 103.

Groot, 1583-1645]. Unsurprisingly, More judged Mede's analysis to be the most appropriate.⁸⁴ Book VI set out to prove the possibility and reasonableness of the prophecies of the Return of Christ for the Last Judgement, the Resurrection of the dead and the Conflagration of the Earth, and also to challenge the radical teachings of Niclaes.⁸⁵

In Book VII More reviewed the Old Testament prophecies foretelling the birth, life and death of the Messiah and the corresponding facts that he argued proved the historicity of Jesus Christ.⁸⁶ The latter part of the book was a scathing deconstruction of astrology as divination, which More described as "very frivolous and ridiculous" and "a rotten relick of the ancient Pagan Superstition".⁸⁷ He accused astrologers of being "impudent Impostours" and ascribed any correct predictions to chance or "*the consulting of Ghosts and Familiar Spirits*".⁸⁸ In Book VIII More used Old and New Testament passages to define a godly and righteous Christian life and to defend Jesus from charges of blasphemous crimes including conjuring the Devil, anger, impatience, madness, and debauchery, levelled by "malicious and ignorant" and "wicked and perverse men".⁸⁹ More compared the divine miracle of the Brazen Serpent to "Paganical Superstition" of talismans, attributing any apparent efficacy of talismans to chance, the Spirit of Nature, or demons.⁹⁰

Book IX examined the four 'derivative' properties of mystery: "as from the *Obscurity* of this Mystery arises *Venerability*; from the *Intelligibleness*, *Communicability*; from *Truth*, a *Power of gaining Assent*; and lastly, from *Usefulness*, an *affectionate prizing of it*, and a *Zeal or desire of promoting the knowledge and virtue of it in the World as much as we can*."⁹¹ Finally, in Book X, More noted the variations across different Christian sects, proposed rules that should form the core of Christian piety, made the case for toleration and liberty of

⁸⁴ More, *GMG*, V.xvi p. 189.

⁸⁵ More, *GMG*, VI.xii p. 247.

⁸⁶ More, *GMG*, VII.i p. 280.

⁸⁷ More, *GMG*, VII.xvi p. 354 & VII.xiv p. 336.

⁸⁸ More, *GMG*, VII.xvi p. 348 & VII.xvii p. 358.

⁸⁹ More, *GMG*, VIII.xiii p. 412.

⁹⁰ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv pp. 430-3.

⁹¹ More, *GMG*, IX.i p. 453.

conscience, and declared, “*That Liberty of Religion is the common and natural Right of all Nations and Persons*”.⁹²

At the Restoration in 1660, More and the Cambridge Platonists came under attack as their emphasis on moderate and rational theology meant they were closely associated with, and often considered part of, the ‘Latitude-Men’.⁹³ Many suspected ‘Latitude-men’ were ousted from their positions, including More’s friends Worthington and Whichcote. Anonymous publications in 1662 and 1670 set out the Latitudinarian position, probably written by the theologians Simon Patrick [1626-1707] and Edward Fowler respectively.⁹⁴ They argued for theological rationalism, that the primary characteristic of God was, necessarily, absolute goodness (in contrast to the arbitrary predestination and voluntarism of Calvinists), that the fundamentals of religion were few and clear, and then, where scripture and reason differed, reason was to take precedence, permitting different opinions about peripheral aspects.⁹⁵ More placed great emphasis on “the Reasonableness of our Religion”,⁹⁶ and his rational theology was popular. However, his public religious toleration and support for Origen’s Christian philosophy, combining Platonism, Scriptures and the heterodox doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, left him vulnerable. An anonymous list of objections to More’s *Grand Mystery of Godliness* was privately circulated in 1663. More was “subtle and persuasive” in reply to the charges in *The Apology of Dr. Henry More* (1664), claiming some of his controversial Origenist ideas were only hypothetical and using biblical cases to defend his various arguments.⁹⁷ The objector, the Master of Peterhouse College, Cambridge, Joseph Beaumont [1616-1699], responded in print in 1665 to clarify his original objections and challenge More’s “insolent” responses in his *Apology*. Beaumont disputed some of More’s “repugnant Doctrines” such as More’s denial of the ‘numerical’ (identical) resurrection of the physical body, and questioned More’s contradictory attitude towards the historical

⁹² More, *GMG*, X.xi p. 521.

⁹³ McAdoo, *Anglicanism*, pp. 158-9, 187-8; Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 79-89.

⁹⁴ [Simon Patrick], *A brief account of the new sect of latitude-men together with some reflections upon the new philosophy* (London: s.n., 1662); [Edward Fowler], *The principles and practices of certain moderate divines of the Church of England (greatly mis-understood), truly represented and defended* (London: Lodowick Lloyd, 1670).

⁹⁵ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 81-4.

⁹⁶ More, *CSPW* (1662), ‘Preface General’, pp. vii-viii.

⁹⁷ More, *AHM*, passim; Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 86-8, 87, 100-4, 115.

Jews.⁹⁸ Sensing the danger of provoking further attacks, More managed to restrain himself from an immediate response.⁹⁹

Another polemic against the ideas of More and the Cambridge Platonists came from the ambitious and doctrinaire cleric Samuel Parker [1640-1688]. Parker published two tracts in 1666 to contrast the humble and moderate Anglican experimental philosophers of the Royal Society with the heterodox, irrational and enthusiastic Platonists with their Origenist doctrines and theological optimism. Parker and Stillingfleet criticised More's Mosaic Cabbala and his claims regarding the philosophical inheritance from the Jews to Pythagoras.¹⁰⁰ Again, More diplomatically refrained from responding immediately, probably because of Parker's Royal Society connections and position of official licenser for the Bishop of London, but he eventually responded to the objections in 1682.¹⁰¹

In *A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity* (1664) More advocated the peaceful proliferation of Protestantism and defined "Antichristianism" as "*real Impiety, gross Fraud and Couzenage, and most barbarous and unparallel'd Cruelty against the harmless Members of Christ*". More's anti-Catholic and pro-Anglican polemic condemned pagan and Roman Catholic beliefs and practices as contrary to scripture and the laws of Jesus Christ, and claimed to vindicate the Church of England "*from all suspicion of Antichristianism*."¹⁰² Essentially he identified Roman Catholicism as the common enemy of all Protestants, probably to divert attention from his relatively minor divergences from the new orthodoxy.

⁹⁸ Joseph Beaumont, *Some observations upon the apologie of Dr. Henry More for his mystery of godliness* (Cambridge: John Field, 1665), pp. 2, 8-27; Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 86-9; Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 138-9.

⁹⁹ See chapter two, p. 86.

¹⁰⁰ Samuel Parker, *A free and impartial censure of the Platonick philosophie* (Oxford: W. Hall for Richard Davis, 1666); Samuel Parker, *An account of the nature and extent of the divine dominion & goodnesse especially as they refer to the Origenian hypothesis concerning the preexistence of souls* (Oxford: W. Hall for R. Davis, 1666); Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines sacrae, or, A rational account of the grounds of Christian faith, as to the truth and divine authority of the Scriptures and the matters therein contained* (London: R.W. for Henry Mortlock, 1662). See also Hutton, 'Edward Stillingfleet', pp. 71-6; Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, pp. 143-6; Iliffe, *Priest of Nature*, pp. 196-7.

¹⁰¹ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 116-7. See chapter two, p. 86 in this thesis.

¹⁰² More, *ME-MI*, 'To the Reader', sig. A4-A5v.

The *Mystery of Iniquity* was structured in two parts, each of two books. Book I of the first part outlined ‘antichristian’ beliefs proscribed in the Bible, such as idolatry, giving examples of idolatrous practices by the Israelites, heathens, Jews, and Roman Catholics. Book II argued against usurping the office of God by claiming one’s church or interpretation of scripture to be infallible, pretending to prophecy and miracles, elevating the importance of saints and others to the same level of importance as Jesus, deliberate obscurity or concealment of God’s message, heresy, and schism. More also gave horrific details of the “Diabolical Barbarity” of torture and punishment meted out to heretics by the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁰³ In the second part, *Synopsis Prophetica*, Book I explained the biblical prophecies of ‘antichristianism’ from Daniel and St John, many of which More interpreted as corresponding to the Roman Catholic Church; More explained that prophecies were deliberately obscure to ensure proper consideration and to prevent the subjects recognising and thus altering details to impair the connection.¹⁰⁴ More’s “*Alphabet of Prophetick Iconisms*” was a dictionary of apocalyptic terminology with generally agreed meanings.¹⁰⁵ He also outlined “Rules” to help choose between different interpretations of prophecy.¹⁰⁶ Book II contained More’s denigration of apocalyptic interpretations by Grotius and the Spanish Jesuit theologian Francisco Ribera [1537-1591] and More’s divergences from some of Mede’s interpretations since 1660. The book concluded by expounding how the Church of England opposed and condemned ‘Antichristianism’.

2.9 1667-8: Ethics and Divine Dialogues

More’s manual on ethics, *Enchiridion Ethicum* (1667), was very popular but it was his only work on the subject. There was a second edition in 1669, a third edition in 1679, it was reprinted at least six times, and it was translated into English by ‘K.W.’ [Edward Southwell] as *An Account of Virtue* (1690).¹⁰⁷ Published in Latin, it helped extend More’s reputation as a philosopher and theologian among the European intelligentsia. It anticipated a work on ethics planned by his friend Cudworth, which

¹⁰³ More, *ME-MI*, II.xv p. 166, see II.xiv-xvi pp. 161-73.

¹⁰⁴ More, *ME-SP*, I.ii p. 212.

¹⁰⁵ More, *ME-SP*, I.v-ix pp. 226-59.

¹⁰⁶ See chapter four, p. 139.

¹⁰⁷ Crocker, *Henry More*, p. 209; Hutton, ‘Moral Philosophy’, p. 23.

in fact was never published.¹⁰⁸ More described ethics as “*the Art of Living well and happily*” and he quoted fluently from diverse sources, particularly classical philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Marcus Tullius Cicero, Marcus Aurelius, Andronicus of Rhodes, Hierocles of Alexandria and a few contemporary philosophers such as Descartes and Hobbes with references in the margin for readers to follow up.¹⁰⁹

More structured the *Enchiridion Ethicum* in three books. Book I listed twenty-three moral “Noemata” (axioms) or “Intellectual Principles”,¹¹⁰ and explained human experience as a mixture of passions, reasoning intellect and conscience. He theorised that the passions, “the *Plastic Part*”, were seated in the heart, whereas perception and reasoning were in the brain, and described conscience as “the *Boniform Faculty of the Soul* (which is clearly divine)”.¹¹¹ The passions were the “blind Instincts of Nature” that could be influenced by the Spirit of Nature,¹¹² and More expanded this discussion in the second edition with an additional four chapters, aligned closely to Descartes’s *Les Passions de L’Ame* (1649), “Admiration, Love, Hatred, Desire (Cupidity), Joy, Sadness (Grief)”.¹¹³ More proposed that the six primitive passions could be condensed to three: Admiration; Love (combining Joy, Love and Desire); and Hatred (combining Hatred and Sadness).¹¹⁴ With his focus on “*Moral*” rather than “*Natural Philosophy*”, More deliberately bypassed the physiological aspects, such as the effects of the passions on the blood and the heart, that Descartes had included.¹¹⁵

In Book II, More developed the three “Primitive Virtues” (Prudence, Sincerity, and Patience), the three “Principal Derivative Virtues” (Justice, Fortitude, and

¹⁰⁸ Hutton, ‘More’, *ODNB*.

¹⁰⁹ More, *EE*, I.i p. 1 [AV, I.1 p. 1]. E.g. for Aristotle’s comments on happiness when contemplating the divine, More noted, “*Ethic. Nicom. l.10. cap. 7.*” More, *EE*, I.ii p. 6 [AV, I.ii p. 7]. From Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, translated by F. H. Peters, 5th edition (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Truebner & Co., 1893), I.x pp. 242-3.

¹¹⁰ More, *EE*, I.iv p. 17-28 [AV, I.iv p. 20-7].

¹¹¹ More, *EE*, I.ii p. 5, I.v p. 31 & I.iii p. 11 [AV, I.ii p. 6, I.vi p. 36 & I.iii p. 14].

¹¹² More, *EE*, I.v p. 31 [AV, I.vi p. 36].

¹¹³ More, *EE*, 2nd edition (London: J. Flesher, 1669), I.vii p. 38 [AV, I.vii p. 44]. From René Descartes, *Les Passions de L’Ame* (1649) translated as *The passions of the soule* (London: A. C., 1650), II.lxix p. 54. See also Hutton, ‘Moral Philosophy’, pp. 18-23.

¹¹⁴ More, *EE* (1669), I.vii p. 39 [AV, I.vii p. 45].

¹¹⁵ More, *EE* (1669), I.vii, p. 46 [AV, I.vii, pp. 53-4]. From Descartes, *Passions*, lxxi pp. 55-6 & xcvi p. 77. See also Dolson, ‘Ethical System’, pp. 597-8.

Temperance) and a host of “Reductive Virtues”.¹¹⁶ More also included a chapter on “External Goods”, which included the wit, memory and wisdom of the soul, the strength, agility, beauty and health of the body, and other factors such as wealth, liberty, authority and friendship.¹¹⁷ More examined the opinions of the classical philosophers on each topic and linked them back to his ‘Noemata’.

In Book III, More suggested how to acquire good morals, passions and virtues and he endorsed free will, unlike Hobbes.¹¹⁸ More outlined the benefits and combined effects of such virtues, but his practical advice seems to have been limited to practice and piety. He concluded the *Ethics* with a philosophical discussion of heaven as the ultimate reward for living a good and virtuous life.¹¹⁹

The following year, More published the *Divine Dialogues* (1668), which also proved to be very popular, with a second edition in 1679 and at least two reprints. More’s view—shared by other Cambridge Platonists and variously described as an intellectualist, rationalist, providential, necessitarian, or optimistic theology—held that truth, goodness and justice were objective. This was in contrast to the orthodox Calvinist, and ‘voluntarist’ view of God, in which an omnipotent God is free to do as he desires, and his will is beyond the comprehension of man.¹²⁰ The *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, *Ethics* and *Divine Dialogues* detailed these controversial views on the attributes of God that had led More to the Origenist doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul.¹²¹

The *Divine Dialogues* were published in two parts under the pseudonym ‘Franciscus Palæopolitanus’. The dialogues were meandering Platonic-style philosophical debates between seven friends, each representing a different perspective, and lightened by some playful banter between the characters e.g. ‘Hylobares’ is described as “a young, witty, and well-moralized *Materialist*” and ‘Philotheus’ as “a zealous

¹¹⁶ More, *EE*, II.i p. 79 & II.iv p. 96 & II.viii, p. 115 [AV, II.i p. 92 & II.iv p. 111 & II.viii p. 134].

¹¹⁷ More, *EE*, II.x p. 138 [AV, II.x pp. 160-1].

¹¹⁸ More, *EE*, III.i-ii pp. 149-64 [AV, III.i-ii pp. 172-190]; Reid, *Metaphysics*, pp. 179-80.

¹¹⁹ More, *EE*, III.x p. 218 [AV, III.x p. 255].

¹²⁰ For example Crocker, ‘Biographical Essay’, p. 8; Henry, ‘Spirit of Nature’, p. 62; Lichtenstein, *More*, p. 50.

¹²¹ See chapter five, pp. 163-5.

and sincere Lover of God and *Christ*, and of the whole Creation”. The character that seems to represent More’s opinions most closely is ‘Bathynous’ “the Deeply-thoughtfull or profoundly-thinking man”.¹²²

The First Dialogue discussed the existence and attributes of God; that there was no phenomenon in nature that was purely mechanical; and the nature of spirit and matter. The Second Dialogue was concerned with God’s providence and benevolence given the amount of apparent evil, injustice and sin in the world. The Third Dialogue extended the discussion of providence to consider how the cruel and inhumane practices of barbarians were permitted seemingly to contrast with the good practices and grace of Jesus Christ; God’s benevolence in the pre-existence of souls and the importance of living a divine life; and the “two chiefest Attributes of God, his *Wisedome* and his *Goodness*.”¹²³

The Fourth and Fifth Dialogues comprise the same cast plus a new character “Ocymo, Cuphophon's Boy, so called from his Nimbleness”. The Fourth Dialogue was a discussion on the ‘Kingdom of God’ and the absolute nature of God’s sovereignty. More argued that because of God’s “infinite *Goodness*, *Wisedome* and *Power*”, God had to create the best possible world.¹²⁴ The Fourth and Fifth Dialogues included interpretations of the biblical prophecies for the ‘Kingdom of God’ and of the impostures and bloodshed of the Roman Catholic Church as signs of the approaching Apocalypse. The Fifth Dialogue also examined biblical visions of heaven and angels, how a pure spirit could be free of sin and prejudice, and considered false religions and mystical and enthusiastic interpretations, especially Jacob Boehme.

More often had to balance his own emphasis on mystical and spiritual inspiration with his polemics against ‘enthusiastic fancies’. In the Fifth Dialogue he emphasised that “*dry Reason* unassisted by the *Spirit*” should be avoided when interpreting scripture. Philotheus explained, “In the guidance of this Spirit a man shall either immediately feel and smell out by an holy Sagacity what is right and true, and what

¹²² More, *DD-123*, sig b4v.

¹²³ More, *DD-123*, III.xxvii p. 480.

¹²⁴ More, *DD-45*, IV.vii pp. 24-5. See also Henry, ‘Spirit of Nature’, pp. 62-3.

false and perverse, or at least he shall use his Reason aright to discover it.”¹²⁵ The Fifth Dialogue included the account of the apocalyptic and prophetic ‘Vision of the seven Thunders’ by Philotheus’s acquaintance, ‘Theomanes’, that More later admitted was one of his own.¹²⁶

In the 1679 second edition, published in English in 1713, More added six additional sections at the end of the Third Dialogue in which the characters discussed how the three persons of the Holy Trinity were three separate substances (or more precisely ‘tres Hypostases’ – meaning ‘three beings’), yet had a unified Divine Essence.¹²⁷ More added only minor Scholia at the end of the First, Third, Fourth and Fifth Dialogues to expand upon some of his metaphysical arguments and connect them to the relevant sections of his *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671); to elaborate on the mystery of the Trinity and the biblical prophecy of the apocalypse; and to include a rant against the enthusiasm of Quakers and Familists.¹²⁸ Despite the title, More published the *Divine Dialogues* in his philosophical, rather than theological, collected works, indicating his opinion on their particular contributions to his worldview.

A short treatise entitled ‘A brief Discourse Of the true Grounds of The Certainty of Faith in Points of Religion’ and a set of ‘Divine Hymns’ were appended after the Fifth Dialogue in the 1668 and 1713 editions of the *Divine Dialogues*. Both were included in the collected *Theological Works* of 1675 and 1708. The ‘Discourse’ comprised thirty-two conclusions incrementally building the position that no true revelation from God can be contradictory or repugnant to unprejudiced sense and reason.¹²⁹ With his seven brief devotional ‘Divine Hymns’ More made a rare return to poetry. Each ‘hymn’ was between six and fourteen verses long and covered a

¹²⁵ More, *DD-45*, V.xxvii pp. 403-4.

¹²⁶ More, *DD-45*, V.xxxviii pp. 440-51. Ward, *Life*, pp. 125-6.

¹²⁷ More, *DD-123*, 2nd edition in *OO*, III.xl-xlvi pp. 763-8 [More, *DD*, 2nd edition (1713), III.xl-xlvi, pp. 535-48].

¹²⁸ More, *DD-123*, 2nd edition in *OO*, ‘Scholia’, pp.678-80, 768-72, & *DD-45*, 2nd edition in *OO*, ‘Scholia’, pp. 692-3, 745-9 [More, *DD*, ‘Scholia’, pp. 528-34, 548-59, 560-3, 563-76].

¹²⁹ More, *DD-45*, ‘A brief Discourse Of the true Grounds of The Certainty of Faith in Points of Religion’, pp. 467-93.

different topic: the nativity, passion, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, the descent of the Holy Ghost, and also the creation and redemption of the world.¹³⁰

2.10 1670-79: Metaphysics and Mechanical Philosophy

More's *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671), his 'Manual of Metaphysics', continued his campaign to prove "the existence of *Incorporeal Substances*: which certainly is the principal pivot of all Religion and Theology." Dedicated to Archbishop Sheldon, it was expanded with copious Scholia in 1679 to respond to criticisms of his ideas, especially regarding gravity and atmospheric pressure.¹³¹ The subtitle was: "A Manual of Metaphysics: or, A short and clear Dissertation of Incorporeal substances. The First Part: Of the existence and nature of incorporeal substances in general. In which, incidentally, very many phenomena of the world are examined against the mechanical laws of Descartes, and the vanity and falsity of his philosophy, as well as of all others who suppose that worldly phenomena can be resolved into purely mechanical causes, are revealed."¹³² This indicated it was the first instalment of a planned series, but left unfinished as More transferred his attention to translating his other works into Latin. The second part was planned to cover God and the Spirit of Nature, and the third, souls and genii.¹³³ It also demonstrates More's public effort to distance himself from materialists who used Descartes's philosophy to promote a purely mechanistic (and therefore God-less) worldview.

More provided proofs for the existence of spiritual substance drawn from the observable phenomena of space, matter, time, physical phenomena and organic phenomena.¹³⁴ More argued: for infinite spiritual space and absolute (i.e. non-relativistic) motion (contrary to Descartes); that matter and extension did not equate (in opposition to Descartes and Hobbes); against the animate matter of French philosopher Pierre Gassendi [1592-1655]; and, against the common Scholastic concept whereby the soul was deemed to be wholly in the whole body and at the

¹³⁰ More, *DH*, pp. 495-511.

¹³¹ More, *EM*, 'Epistola Dedicatoria', sig. ¶2v-¶4v, I p. 1 [(1995), I, 'Preface', pp. I-III, I p. 1].

¹³² More, *EM*, title page [(1995), I, p. xiv, n. 1].

¹³³ More, *EM*, 'Ad Lectorum Præfatio', sig. B2-B2v [(1995) I, p. XI]; More, *EM*, 2nd edition in *OO*, 'Scholia in Cap xxviii, Sect. 21', p. 328 [(1995), I, p.138].

¹³⁴ Jacob, *Metaphysics*, I, 'Introduction: Analysis', p. xvii.

same time wholly in each part of the body ('Holenmerianism').¹³⁵ Contrary to Descartes, Boyle, Galileo and Hobbes, More denied motion and innate force in mere matter, seeing the Spirit of Nature (or 'Hylarchic Principle') as the agent of the elasticity of air, buoyancy, tides, magnetism, gravity, the size, shape and movement of celestial bodies, etc.¹³⁶ This was also his explanation for optics (light and colours), rainbows, meteors, winds, thunder and other such intangible phenomena, again in contrast to the mechanical explanations of Descartes and the natural philosopher Robert Hooke [1635-1703].¹³⁷ Similarly, More argued that the formation of plants and animals, the operation of the mind and apparitions and prophecies, were all governed by this spiritual agency, rather than by mechanical operations or accidental occurrences as Descartes had proposed.¹³⁸ More invoked the Spirit of Nature as the organising intermediary principle because he reasoned that matter was not sentient and thus could not 'know' and follow God's natural laws, although other contemporaries such as Newton preferred to explain this in terms of God's direct action.¹³⁹

More did not see the value of experimentation and establishing 'matters of fact' for their own sake and thus considered it important to explain the findings of the experimentalists in the context of metaphysics for the purposes of theology. As early as 1648, More expressed this opinion in a letter to Hartlib, "men may dig and droyle like blinde molewarpes in the earth, and yett never be able to emerge in dias luminis oras ["to reach the shores of light" – from Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, Book I], but ly dead and buried in an heape and rabble of slibber-sauce experimentes, that are to little more purpose, then what old wives, rude Mariners, or Mechanicks are able to apply them to."¹⁴⁰ This caused controversy in Hartlib's circle, and provoked an

¹³⁵ Jacob, *Metaphysics*, I, 'Introduction: Analysis', pp. xvii-xxxv. See also Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I Q. 76 Article 8. See chapter one, pp. 23-4 in this thesis.

¹³⁶ More, *EM*, xi-xviii, pp. 102-239 [(1995), II, pp. 1-146]. See Jacob, *Metaphysics*, II, 'Introduction: The Spirit of Nature', pp. xi-xxii.

¹³⁷ More, *EM*, xix-xxiii, pp. 240-307 [(1995), II, pp. 147-210]. See also Jacob, ed., *Metaphysics* (1995), II, 'Introduction: The Spirit of Nature', pp. xxii-xxvii.

¹³⁸ More, *EM*, xxiv-xxvi, pp. 307-350 [(1995), II, pp. 211-243] See also Jacob, ed., *Metaphysics* (1995), II, 'Introduction: The Spirit of Nature', pp. xxvii-xxix. See chapter seven, pp. 222-49 in this thesis.

¹³⁹ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 118.

¹⁴⁰ Henry More to Samuel Hartlib, 11th December [1648?], Ref 18/1/38A-39B, (University of Sheffield, 2008) [http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/hartlib/view?file=main/18A_01_38, last accessed 23rd February 2013]. This letter is partially transcribed in Webster, 'New Sources', pp. 365-6.

equally scathing reply from polymath William Petty [1623-1687]. Petty proclaimed Baconian empiricism as superior to theoretical philosophy, which he described as “frivolous conjectures & Imaginations” and “Vaporous garlick & Onions of phantasmaticall seeming philosophy”.¹⁴¹ As Coudert neatly summarised, More was “neither temperamentally nor intellectually suited for” experimental philosophy. In More’s mind there was “a fundamental and essentially moral difference between matter and spirit. Matter was inherently “vile,” “low,” “mean,” and “crass” all words used by More, while spirit was the opposite.”¹⁴²

Therefore, perhaps it was not surprising that in 1670-1 when the physician and pamphleteer Henry Stubbe [1632-1676] attacked the ‘trivial’ experimental philosophy espoused by Glanvill and the Royal Society, Stubbe claimed More agreed with him; “Dr. More, albeit a *Member of this Society* heretofore, (for he allows nothing to it now) yet a *pious* one, professeth that this *Mechanical Philosophy* doth incline to *Atheism*”.¹⁴³ The Royal Society members responded promptly. Glanvill printed an answer to Stubbe including a letter from More. More had not denied Stubbe’s description of the conversation, but restated his position on mechanism and expressed his esteem for the Royal Society, remarking, “the great Opinion I have of their *experimental Philosophy*, [...] And do particularly note how serviceable their *Natural Experiments in matter* are to the clear Knowledge and Demonstration of the *Existence of immaterial Beings*: So far are they from tending to *Atheism*.”¹⁴⁴ Stubbe quickly published again, invoking More’s metaphysics as directly opposed to the mechanical philosophy and mocking More’s endorsement of the miracles of Pythagoras.¹⁴⁵ Notably, More did not engage Stubbe directly in this controversy, probably because Stubbe’s claims were too close to the truth.

¹⁴¹ William Petty to Samuel Hartlib, not dated, but clearly in response to More’s letter of 11th December [1648?], Ref 7/123/2A, (University of Sheffield, 2008) [<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/hartlib/browse.jsp?id=7%2F123%2F1a-2b%3A%202b%20blank>, last accessed 23rd February 2013]. This letter is transcribed in Webster, ‘New Sources’, pp. 367-8.

¹⁴² Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, p. 122; Coudert, ‘Kabbalah, and Quakers’, p. 55.

¹⁴³ Henry Stubbe, *The Plus Ultra reduced to a Non Plus in Legends no histories, or, A specimen of some animadversions upon The history of the Royal Society* (London: s.n., 1670), p. 173.

¹⁴⁴ Henry More, ‘A Letter from Dr. More to J. G. giving an Account how M. Stubb belies him. P. 173.’ (154-158) in Joseph Glanvill, *A praefatory answer to Mr. Henry Stubbe* (London, A Clark: 1671), p. 155.

¹⁴⁵ Henry Stubbe, *A Reply unto the Letter written to Mr. Henry Stubbe in Defense of The History of the Royal Society* (Oxford: Richard Davis, 1671), ‘A Letter to Dr. Henry More’, pp. 50-1, 63-80; Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 151-6; see also Mordechai Feingold, ‘Stubbe, Henry (1632–1676)’, *ODNB*

More disagreed with Robert Boyle on the underlying principles of pneumatics and hydrostatics. He continued to use Boyle's findings as part of his 'proof' of the existence of the Spirit of Nature—an active and divine force of nature giving motion to matter. He had begun this in the third edition of *An Antidote against Atheism* in 1662 and he expanded his argument over two chapters in *Enchiridion Metaphysicum*.¹⁴⁶ Boyle was obliged to respond in print, fearing his own interpretations might be thought "irrational and absurd" and that the explanation by "a Person of so much Fame" as More "if unanswer'd, might pass for unanswerable".¹⁴⁷ In 1672 Boyle politely argued how the phenomena could be "solv'd Mechanically" and thus there was "no need" for "Incorporeal Creatures".¹⁴⁸

Their fundamental difference of purpose was irreconcilable; the empiricist Boyle sought to establish matters of fact and the metaphysician More sought to prove the existence of spirits.¹⁴⁹ Boyle was satisfied with the argument for proof of God from design as revealed in mechanical laws identified through experiments.¹⁵⁰ More's providential theology held reason and morality as essential principles that bound and constrained God because of his own goodness. More therefore had no qualms about insisting on the strict dichotomy between spirit (providing life and activity) and matter (passive and inert). In contrast, Boyle's voluntarist theology rejected any presumption to limit God's power or free will. Boyle considered that natural philosophy served to demonstrate the existence of an omnipotent God by identifying God's mechanical laws and was concerned that More was denying God's power to endow matter with active properties.¹⁵¹

(Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008)

[<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26734>, last accessed 18th January 2015].

¹⁴⁶ More, AA, 3rd edition in CSPW (1662), II.ii p. 46; More, EM, xii & xiii pp. 125-81 [(1995), II, pp. 20-102].

¹⁴⁷ Robert Boyle, *Tracts [...] containing New Experiments, touching the Relation betwixt Flame and Air. And about Explosions. An Hydrostatical Discourse occasion'd by some Objections of Dr. Henry More against some Explications of New Experiments made by the Author[...]* (London: Richard Davis, 1672), 'An Hydrostatical Discourse', sig. k3-k3v [Boyle Works, VII, pp. 141-2].

¹⁴⁸ Boyle, *Tracts [...] Hydrostatical Discourse*, 'An Hydrostatical Discourse', pp. 47-8 [Boyle Works, VII, p. 159].

¹⁴⁹ Shapin & Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*, pp. 207-24. See also Coudert, 'Witchcraft', pp. 124-5.

¹⁵⁰ Boyle, *Tracts [...] Hydrostatical Discourse*, 'An Hydrostatical Discourse', pp. 143-4 [Boyle Works, VII, p. 184].

¹⁵¹ Henry, 'Spirit of Nature', pp. 61-2, 64-5, 69.

Also in 1672, George Sinclair answered More's objection to the "Spring of the Aire"—that if air had weight and pressure then the greater pressure exerted on the broad top face of a "Lump of Butter" relative to the sides would squash it flat—by illustrating that if a square prism of butter was underwater (where water pressure was acknowledged) then although there was a differential pressure on the smaller side faces relative to the larger top and bottom faces, the pressure on all the edges remained equal.¹⁵² A couple of years later, Hooke challenged the entire "Hylarchick Spirit" concept in *Lampas* (1677), describing it as "needless" and encouraging "Ignorance and Superstition" because the phenomena could be demonstrably explained by the known laws of mechanics and experimental enquiry.¹⁵³

Two treatises were published (anonymously) in 1673 and 1674 by Matthew Hale [1609-1676], the Chief Justice of King's Bench. Hale disagreed with More on gravity and water pressure and rejected his 'Hylarchic Principle', and disputed Boyle's conclusions about air pressure, dismissing the "Spring of Ayr" as "imaginary".¹⁵⁴ More's response was *Remarks upon two late Ingenious Discourses* (1676). More examined Hale's treatises and listed thirty objections against Hale's *Essay* and forty-seven against his *Observations*. These 'remarks' included More's clarification that his "*Principium Hylarchicum*" was not "intelligent [...] but vital only", his re-assertion of the Spirit of Nature and his rejection of Hale's "*intrinsick Gravity*" as an explanation of the observed behaviour of water, oil and quicksilver.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵² More, AA, 3rd edition in CSPW (1662), II.ii pp. 45-6; George Sinclair, *The hydrostaticks, or, The weight, force, and pressure of fluid bodies, made evident by physical, and sensible experiments* (Edinburgh: George Swintoun, James Glen and Thomas Brown, 1672), pp. 117-9.

¹⁵³ Robert Hooke, *Lampas, or, Descriptions of some mechanical improvements of lamps & waterpoises together with some other physical and mechanical discoveries* (London: John Martyn, 1677), pp. 33-4.

¹⁵⁴ [Matthew Hale], *An essay touching the gravitation, or non-gravitation of fluid bodies, and the reasons thereof* (London: W. Godbid, for William Shrewsbury, 1673), pp. 38, 42-3; [Matthew Hale], *Difficiles nugae, or, Observations touching the Torricellian experiment, and the various solutions of the same, especially touching the weight and elasticity of the air* (London: W. Godbid, for William Shrewsbury, 1674), pp. 202-3, 60. See also Alan Cromartie, *Sir Matthew Hale 1609-1676: Law, religion and natural philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 212; Alan Cromartie, 'Hale, Sir Mathew (1609-1676)', *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/11905>, last accessed 4th January 2015].

¹⁵⁵ Henry More, *Remarks upon two late ingenious discourses the one, an essay touching the gravitation and non-gravitation of fluid bodies, the other, observations touching the Torricellian experiment, so far forth as they may concern any passages in his Enchiridium Metaphysicum* (London: Walter Kettilby, 1676), pp. 22-3, 80-3.

Hale responded to More with another treatise (published posthumously in 1677) presenting some new considerations, remarking upon More's remarks, and including a chapter examining and rejecting the Spirit of Nature as "not very credible"; commenting that More's "zeal" for asserting the existence of incorporeal spirits had taken him "farther than was either fit or needful".¹⁵⁶ They maintained civil respect for one another, unlike some of More's other exchanges, but typically More had the last word. In his *Opera Omnia* (1679), More included a second expanded edition of his *Remarks* together with an additional treatise remarking on Hale's remarks on the *Remarks*, in which he continued to defend the Spirit of Nature in response to Sinclair and Hooke.¹⁵⁷

2.11 1675-81: Varia Opera

Through meeting Francis Mercury van Helmont in 1670 (whom he recommended as Anne Conway's personal physician) More gained access to key texts and treatises on Jewish Kabbalah. He realised how different it was from his original assumptions, yet commented to Anne Conway, "there is pretious gold in this Cabbalisticall rubbish".¹⁵⁸ Van Helmont recommended the German Kabbalist, Christian Knorr von Rosenroth [1636-1689], to More and the two corresponded, debating the Lurianic Kabbalah. More wrote a critical Latin treatise entitled *Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aeto-Paedo-Melissaeae*, translated as 'The Fundamentals of Philosophy, or the Cabbala of the Eagle-Boy-Bee', setting out his arguments against Kabbalah. The title referred to a nightmare More interpreted as a metaphor for the problems he saw in the Kabbalah.¹⁵⁹ More's treatise was published by Knorr von Rosenroth with other writings on Kabbalah and Latin translations of the Zohar in a compilation *Kabbala Denudata* (1677): it was reprinted by More in *Opera Omnia* (1679). Whilst More acknowledged a "trace of divine wisdom", he denounced the

¹⁵⁶ [Matthew Hale], *Observations touching the principles of natural motions, and especially touching rarefaction & condensation together with a reply to certain remarks touching the gravitation of fluids* (London: W. Godbid, for W. Shrowsbury, 1677), pp. 25-35, 29, 285.

¹⁵⁷ Greene, 'Spirit of Nature', p. 473.

¹⁵⁸ Henry More to Anne Conway, 5th February 1671/2, in *Conway Letters*, pp. 350-2.

¹⁵⁹ More, 'Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aeto-paedo-melissaeae' in *OO*, pp. 521-8. For example "That the eagle appeared greater at a distance than when it was near and that at the end it changed from an eagle into a bee, humming near the ground, indicated clearly enough that the Jewish Cabbala promises to be much greater and more sublime at first sight than it proves to be at the last." Translation by Coudert, 'Kabbalist Nightmare', pp. 648-9.

Kabbalah's value for Christianity as unnecessarily complicated, materialist, pantheistic and "tantamount to atheism".¹⁶⁰ Much to More's dismay, both Van Helmont and Anne Conway became Quakers and adopted other doctrines from the Lurianic Kabbalah such as metempsychosis (the passing of the soul after death to another body) and universal salvation.¹⁶¹ More regarded Quakers as enthusiasts, but for his friends' sakes, he now made efforts to understand them better and even developed a friendship with the Quaker George Keith [c.1638-1716].¹⁶²

In the 1670s, More's major project was translating his existing works into Latin. The first volume to appear was *Opera Theologica* (1675) including some minor 'improvements' and the new *Visionum Apocalypticarum Ratio Synchronistica*, (see the section on 'Apocalyptic Exposition').¹⁶³ The philosophical works, *Opera Omnia* (1679) contained expanded editions of his major works and a number of previously unpublished short treatises such as a censure of Boehme, a refutation of Glisson's monism, and a two-part refutation of Spinoza.¹⁶⁴ More had corresponded with van Limborch between 1667 and 1687 on various topics including their concern about the appropriation of Cartesianism by atheists, More's Spirit of Nature, and the heresies of Spinoza. More was among the first to critique Spinoza, accusing him of amorality, materialism and atheism, and he was often cited as an authority against materialist philosophies in Holland.¹⁶⁵

In 1680, More's twenty-year old criticisms of astrology came under attack in *Ἀγιαστρολογία* [*Hagiastrologia*], or, *The most sacred and divine science of astrology* by a minister, John Butler [dates unknown]. The first half made claims for the efficacy of astrology and its biblical heritage, claiming Adam had brought the knowledge from Paradise and it passed down the line to Seth, Abraham, Moses,

¹⁶⁰ Coudert, 'Kabbalist Nightmare', pp. 651, 647-8 & Coudert, 'Kabbalah and Quakers', p. 53.

¹⁶¹ Walker, *Decline of Hell*, pp. 123-4.

¹⁶² Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 191-5.

¹⁶³ More, *OT* (1675); reprinted (1700); and translated as *The Theological Works of the most Pious and Learned Henry More, DD.* (London: Joseph Downing, 1708).

¹⁶⁴ Henry More, 'Philosophiae Teutonicae Censura sive Epistola Privata', 'Ad V. C. Epistola altera' and 'Demonstrationis Duarum Propositionum, viz. [Ad substantiam quatenus Substantia est, necessariam Existentiam pertinere, &, Unicam in Mundo Substantiam esse] quae praecipuae apud Spinozium Atheismi sunt Columnae, brevis solidaque Confutatio' in More, *OO*, pp. 536-61, 563-614, 615-35.

¹⁶⁵ Jacob, 'Introduction', in Jacob, ed., *Refutation of Spinoza*, pp. xi, xxxiv; Colie, *Light and Enlightenment*, pp. 7, 52-5, 73-93, 94-116.

Daniel, Jacob, and especially Joseph, whom Butler identified as “*Hermes Trismegistos*”¹⁶⁶ In the second half, Butler attacked the argument against astrology that More had presented in the *Grand Mystery of Godliness*, claiming that More had exhibited “more than *ordinary heat*, and *overmuch sharpness* and *vehemency*” in his criticism and had rejected astrology without bothering to understand it.¹⁶⁷ Butler explained that the astrologer with “true Piety in his heart can very aptly and easily distinguish between *Natural* and *Diabolical* experiments”. For Butler, the study of astrology was a study of the “deep secrets and wonders of Nature”, similar to the occult properties of loadstone, through which he might “glorifie my Maker, by beholding the more of his great Glory in all his wondrous works.”¹⁶⁸

More promptly responded with *Tetractys anti-astrologica* (1681), which comprised four chapters from the *Grand Mystery of Godliness* (Book VII, chapters xiv-xvii) together with some extensive ‘annotations’ as a confutation of the whole basis of judicial astrology. More did not hold back in his counterattack, describing Butler’s claims as “so foul a flux or *Diarrhoea* of frothy wit and filthy language, as to stain so many sheets of paper as he has done.”¹⁶⁹ More’s fundamental objection to astrology was its apparent predestination; that the positions of heavenly bodies controlled the destiny of everyone, even Jesus Christ, and “that all Miracles, Prophecies, Apparitions of Angels, Resurrections from the Dead, are but transitory blasts of their Influence.”¹⁷⁰ He also argued that any genuine effect from the stars traversing the vast expanse of space could not be impeded by a woman’s body and it would penetrate the womb and influence a developing foetus throughout pregnancy thus rendering the concept of astrological nativity, dependent on the date and time of birth, as meaningless.¹⁷¹ More’s arguments were a mixture of biblical exposition, new scientific theories (such as planetary motion and the infinity of worlds), and

¹⁶⁶ J. B. [John Butler], *Ἀγιαστρολογία* [*Hagiastrologia*], or, *The most sacred and divine science of astrology* (London: William Bromwich, 1680), ‘Preface’, sigs. d4v, e2, and ‘The Second Proposition’, p. 28.

¹⁶⁷ Butler, *Hagiastrologia*, ‘Ἀστρολογ’α [astrology] or, *The Most Sacred and Divine Science of Astrology Vindicated*, against the Reverend Dr. More’s Calumnies, in his Explanation of the Grand Mystery of Godliness’, p. 16, 1, 4-5, and *passim*.

¹⁶⁸ Butler, *Hagiastrologia*, ‘Astrology vindicated’, pp. 125-8.

¹⁶⁹ More, *TA*, ‘Preface’, pp. i-ii.

¹⁷⁰ More, *TA*, ‘Preface’, p. vi.

¹⁷¹ More, *TA*, pp. 120-1.

Neoplatonist concepts (such as the Spirit of Nature).¹⁷² Regarding the “mystery of the Load stone”, More referred Butler to the works of Descartes and the natural philosopher and astronomer William Gilbert [1544-1603] for an explanation of the “Magnetical Particles”. More also reasserted that “the *Spirit of the World*” accounted for remote influences such as the “sympathy of the Weapon-salve”.¹⁷³

2.12 1680-2: Defence of Spirits

When Joseph Glanvill died in 1680, More took over his friend’s witchcraft project as editor and published *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1681). Glanvill’s project to answer witchcraft sceptics had developed from his first witchcraft publication, *A Philosophical Endeavour towards the Defence of the being of Witches and Apparition* (1666), reprinted, after most of the print run was destroyed in the Great Fire of London, and re-titled *Some Philosophical Considerations Touching the Being of Witches* (1667), followed by a revised version *A Blow at Modern Sadducism* (1668) that included the infamous story of the Drummer of Tedworth that Glanvill had experienced first-hand in 1663.¹⁷⁴

The sceptic, John Webster, published *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (1677), which argued that witches were either deliberate frauds, such as jugglers and diviners, or passive victims of delusion, such as the ignorant, superstitious and melancholic.¹⁷⁵ More counter-attacked Webster’s arguments in 1679, calling him a “sworn *Advocate of Witches*”.¹⁷⁶ For Glanvill and More, it was important to ‘triumph’ over the Sadducees (a sect that rejected belief in spirits) by providing evidence to prove witches and apparitions were real in order to prevent a decline into disbelief in spirits, angels, the immortality of the soul and ultimately God himself.

¹⁷² More, *TA*, pp. 21-6, 76, 80-1, 84, 88-9, 112-4 and *passim*.

¹⁷³ More, *TA*, pp. 80-1.

¹⁷⁴ See Peter Elmer, *The Library of Dr John Webster: The Making of a Seventeenth-Century Radical* (London: Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 1986); and Antonio Clericuzio, ‘Webster, John (1611–1682)’, *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28944>, last accessed 22nd January 2014].

¹⁷⁵ John Webster, *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*, (London: J. M., 1677), pp. 25-35.

¹⁷⁶ More, *AA*, 4th edition in *OO*, ‘Scholia’, III.ix p. 120 [*CSPW* (1712), p. 167].

“These things hang together in a *Chain of connexion*, [...] and ’tis but an happy chance if he that hath lost one *link* holds another”.¹⁷⁷

Saducismus Triumphatus was extremely popular and influential, with a second expanded edition in 1682 and further editions in 1689, 1700, and 1726. It became “one of the most famous works on demonology ever published”.¹⁷⁸ More and Glanvill became “international authorities” on the dangers of atheism underlying a denial of spirits and witchcraft.¹⁷⁹ Although convictions for witchcraft were in rapid decline in England (the last execution was in 1685, the last conviction in 1712, the last trial in 1717, and the witchcraft statute itself repealed in 1736), this was more the result of increasing scepticism for admissible evidence rather than a rejection of belief in witchcraft per se.¹⁸⁰

Saducismus Triumphatus was structured in two parts: the first part was theoretical, philosophical and metaphysical; and, the second part comprised the evidence in the form of relations. The book opened with a copy of a letter from More to Glanvill that included stories and a critique of Webster’s “*weak and impertinent piece*”.¹⁸¹ This was followed by the final version of Glanvill’s treatise, now entitled ‘Concerning the Possibility of Apparitions and Witchcraft’. Glanvill’s account of the Drummer of Tedworth was re-positioned in the second section as Relation I. At the end of the first part, More included two chapters translated into English from *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* as ‘The easie, true, and genuine Notion, and consistent Explication of the Nature of a Spirit, whereby The Possibility of the Existence of Spirits, Apparitions, and Witchcraft is further confirmed’. In the second part of the book, More edited together all the relations ‘Proving Partly by Holy Scripture, partly by a choice Collection of Modern Relations, The real Existence of Apparitions, Spirits and Witches’. The first section drew on biblical accounts such as the Witch of Endor, and the second on contemporary accounts – the ‘Modern Relations’. Some

¹⁷⁷ Glanvill, *ST*, I, ‘Preface’, p. 4 (sig. F7v).

¹⁷⁸ Michael Hunter, ‘New Light on the ‘Drummer of Tedworth’: conflicting narratives of witchcraft in Restoration England’, *Historical Research*, 78:201 (2005), 311-53, p. 312.

¹⁷⁹ George Lyman Kittredge, *Witchcraft in Old and New England* (New York: Atheneum, 1929, 1972), p. 335; Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, p. 121.

¹⁸⁰ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 537-38; Hunter, *Shape of Orthodoxy* (1995), p. 288.

¹⁸¹ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, pp. 1-57, p. 19.

of these were certainly added by More, but the publisher assured the reader that “none admitted, but such as seemed very well attested and highly credible”.¹⁸² More explained the relations “do real service to true Religion and sound Philosophy” because atheists “are as much afraid of the truth of these stories as an Ape is of a Whip”.¹⁸³

In the second edition of 1682, More added *A Continuation of the Collection, Or, an Addition of some few More Remarkable and True Stories of Apparitions and Witchcraft*, which he also published separately in 1685; and *A Whip for the Droll, Fidler to the Atheist: being Reflections on Drollery and Atheism*, comprising a letter from Glanvill to More first published in the 1668 version and some further comments by More on the Drummer of Tedworth. More also added ‘An Answer to a Letter of a Learned Psychopyrist’ after Baxter disagreed with More’s metaphysical position that the qualities of penetrability and indiscernibility distinguished spirit from matter.¹⁸⁴ Despite their disagreements on the nature of the soul and interpretations of Revelation, Baxter emulated More and published *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits And Consequently, Of the Immortality of Souls* (1691) in which he argued for the existence of spirits and the Christian afterlife based on “unquestionable Histories of Apparitions, Operations, Witchcrafts, Voices, &c. [...] for the Conviction of Sadduces and Infidels”.¹⁸⁵

In 1682 two works by friends of More—Glanvill’s *Lux Orientalis* (first published anonymously in 1662) together with Rust’s *A Discourse of Truth* (first published posthumously in 1677 by Glanvill)—were published together with some ‘Annotations’. The ‘Annotatour’ was not named, but a clue is provided by the ‘Digression’, containing “a brief Answer to Mr. *Baxters Placid Collation with the learned Dr. Henry More*.”¹⁸⁶ The ‘Annotations’, which were also published separately, concluded with a brief ‘Devotional Hymn’.¹⁸⁷ Glanvill’s *Lux Orientalis*

¹⁸² James Collins, ‘The Publisher to the Reader’, in Glanvill, *ST*, sig. A3v.

¹⁸³ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, pp. 16-7.

¹⁸⁴ Henry More, ‘An Answer to a Letter of a Learned Psychopyrist’, in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), pp. 1-5.

¹⁸⁵ Baxter, *Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits*, title page.

¹⁸⁶ George Rust, Joseph Glanvill and Henry More, *TCUT*, especially pp. 172-276.

¹⁸⁷ More, *ATFT*.

echoed More's work in *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659), focussing on the Origenist doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul and its ethereal, aerial and terrestrial states.¹⁸⁸ Rust's *Discourse of Truth* was a brief philosophical treatise describing the truth of things (object) and of understanding (subject); thus certain things were fundamentally true antecedent to and independent of understanding. For example, Rust explained that the triangle comprised three angles that were equal to two right angles, whether one understood that or not; by logic, he progressed to argue that God must be immutable and perfect.¹⁸⁹

In More's 'Annotations' he shared and supported his friends' conclusions and tackled objections to their arguments. For example, More rejected the accusation that the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul led to the concept of reincarnation in 'special cases' such as the deaths of infants, pagans and unrepentant sinners, and counter-argued that the souls "*step forth again into Airy Vehicles*" which gave them a chance of Christian salvation.¹⁹⁰ These were also the answers to twenty-year old criticisms from the likes of Parker and Beaumont discussed earlier, and might explain why More chose anonymity. More also responded to Baxter's '*Placid Collation with the Learned Dr. Henry More*' (1682), which had provoked More to "*Indignation*". In his 'Digression' he answered Baxter's "pretended *Objections*" concerning the penetrability and indiscernibility of spirit.¹⁹¹ More commented that the "the *Idiosyncrasie* of my *Genius*" meant he was "more prone to laugh than to be severely angry or surly at those that do things unhandsomely".¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Joseph Glanvill, *Lux orientalis* (London: s.n., 1662), pp. 144-74; also Joseph Glanvill, 'Lux orientalis', in Rust, Glanvill and More, *TCUT*, pp. 108-37. For a full discussion, see Rhodri Lewis, 'Of "Origenian Platonisme": Joseph Glanvill on the Pre-existence of Souls' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 69:2 (2006), 267-300, especially pp. 276-7.

¹⁸⁹ George Rust, 'A Discourse of Truth', in Rust, Glanvill and More, *TCUT*, pp. 165, 167, 172, 174.

¹⁹⁰ More, *ATFT*, p. 126.

¹⁹¹ Richard Baxter, *Of the nature of spirits; especially mans soul. In a placid Collation with the Learned Dr. Henry More, In a Reply to his Answer to a private Letter, Printed in his second Edition of Mr. Glanvilles Sadduceismus Triumphatus* (London: B. Simmons, 1682); More, 'The Annotatour to the Reader', in Rust, Glanvill and More, *TCUT*, sig. M-M2v; see also More, 'The Annotatour to the Reader', *ATFT*, sig. M-M2v.

¹⁹² More, 'Annotations: The Annotatour to the Reader', in Rust, Glanvill and More, *TCUT*, sig. M-M2v; see also More, 'Annotations: The Annotatour to the Reader', in *ATFT*, sig. M-M2v.

2.13 1669-85: Apocalyptic Exposition

More believed in the apocalypse and that the last days were at hand: the Witnesses had already risen and the Seventh Trumpet had sounded.¹⁹³ More's approach to biblical revelation and prophecy was tempered by his rational providential theology with its emphasis on spiritual perfectionism and illumination. He recognised that it was important to explain and translate the symbolism of prophecy into a coherent structure to enable the internal transformation of the believer. More's interpretation was for a spiritual reign of Christ in which the souls of men would ascend to become aetherial bodies in the celestial realm. This contrasted with the worldly political or social revolution advocated by the Fifth Monarchists or the general anticipation of a physical second coming of Christ and a literal resurrection of terrestrial bodies on earth.¹⁹⁴ More hoped that clarifying the true meaning of biblical prophecy would bring peace by ending sectarianism and confirming Protestant Christianity as the one true religion.¹⁹⁵

There were only a few elements of analysis of biblical prophecies in earlier works by More, mostly in the *Divine Dialogues* and *Synopsis Prophetica*, and he surprised himself by pursuing this topic.¹⁹⁶ More considered *An exposition of the seven epistles to the seven churches* (1669) useful for understanding the "Apocalyptick Visions" of St. John in Revelation, and also for providing testimony for the Reformed Protestant against the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁹⁷ He postulated that the prophecies of seven churches reached "to the end of all" (similar to the prophecies of the seven seals), that the names of the churches (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamus, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea) signified their state, and that a moral or mystical exposition was compatible with a literal one.¹⁹⁸ More examined the details of each church and concluded which period of the history of Christianity it corresponded with—for example he linked the Roman Catholic Church with

¹⁹³ Hutton, 'Apocalypse', p. 137; More, *AARJ*, 'The Preface to the Reader', p. xxv; More, *DD-45*, IV.xxxvi p. 195.

¹⁹⁴ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 104-6.

¹⁹⁵ Hutton, 'Apocalypse', pp. 139-30; Johnston, 'Anglican Apocalypse', pp. 467-99.

¹⁹⁶ More, *ESESC*, 'Preface', sig. a-av.

¹⁹⁷ More, *ESESC*, 'Preface', sig. b6v-b7.

¹⁹⁸ More, *ESESC*, i pp. 1-3.

Pergamus.¹⁹⁹ The second half of the book was a separate work titled *An Antidote against Idolatry*, which will be discussed in the next section.

In 1675, More published *Visionum Apocalypticarum Ratio Synchronistica* which explained the synchronisms and relationship of different aspects of the apocalyptic visions, such as the seven trumpets, the seven seals, and the seven churches.²⁰⁰ The treatise and diagrams were translated into English and formed the basis of the ‘Epilogue’ that More appended to *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* (1680).²⁰¹ The diagram was an updated and more comprehensive version of that presented by Mede in the second edition of his *Clavis Apocalypica* [*The Key to the Apocalypse*] (1632).²⁰² More analysed, corrected and extended Mede’s ‘Synchronisms’ and refuted the “the cavils of a late writer *R. H. of Salisbury*”.²⁰³ “R.H.” was Richard Hayter [1611/2-1684], a graduate of Magdalen, Oxford who lived in Salisbury and published *The Meaning of the Revelation* (1675), reprinted in 1676 under the same title and also as *The Apocalyps Unveyl’d*. Hayter had not referred explicitly to More, but his twelve major disputations challenged the expositions by Mede and “other Interpreters”, including the generally accepted interpretation of Babylon as Rome.²⁰⁴ More’s criticisms sparked another skirmish, but Hayter died before his *Errata Mori* [*The Errors of More*] was published.²⁰⁵

More explained how *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos* endorsed natural religion, revealed Christianity, the reformed church, Jesus as the true messiah, and provided corrective evidence against atheists, Fifth-Monarchists, and the Church of Rome.²⁰⁶ More was proud of his “*Excellent and transcendant*”, “*Authentick and Intelligible*” book and judged it to be “*so sound and assured*” that it ought to be the definitive

¹⁹⁹ More, *ESESC*, v pp. 61-3.

²⁰⁰ Henry More, ‘*Visionum Apocalypticarum Ratio Synchronistica*’, in *OT* (1675), pp. 15-47.

²⁰¹ More, *AARJ*, ‘The Epilogue’, p. 258v (marked page 256), see pp. 256-259 for the explanation.

²⁰² Joseph Mede, *Clavis Apocalypica ex Innatis et Insitis Visionum Characteribus eruta et demonstrata*, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: Apud Tom. Buck celeberrimae Academiae Typographum, 1632), p. 32v. [translated by Richard More as *The Key of the Revelation* (London: R. B. for Phil. Stephens, 1643), p. 26v (marked page 27)]

²⁰³ More, *AARJ*, ‘The Epilogue’, p. 260, (marked page 256), see pp. 256-259 for the explanation.

²⁰⁴ Richard Hayter, *The Meaning of the Revelation* (London: J. R. for John Williams, 1675), title page & xvii, ‘Disputation XII’, pp. 214-49.

²⁰⁵ Anthony Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses* (London: Tho. Bennet, 1692), Vol. 2, Entry 482 for Richard Hayter, p. 577.

²⁰⁶ More, *AARJ*, ‘Preface’, pp. xvi-xxviii.

interpretation.²⁰⁷ It was divided into twenty-two chapters—one for each chapter of Revelation—and each chapter presented a verse together with a brief exposition on the meaning of the biblical text, concluding with further explanations in the “Notes”. Almond suggests that this structure was analogous to the Baconian method of collecting and listing the data before commencing analysis and determining the theories or conclusions.²⁰⁸

A Plain and Continued Exposition of the several Prophecies or Divine Visions of the Prophet Daniel soon followed in 1681 to demonstrate “so palpable a correspondency betwixt the *Apocalypse* and *Daniel*”.²⁰⁹ The book was divided into sections for each of the six visions of Daniel, and the corresponding Bible chapter was referenced at the start of each section. More referenced the key interpreters of biblical prophecy, such as French reformer John Calvin [1509-1564], Grotius and Mede, and noted their biases.²¹⁰ More’s interpretations of the visions were very detailed, for example explaining how and why the leopard represented the Greek empire under Alexander.²¹¹ In the ‘Threefold Appendage’, More presented arguments against the conclusions of Grotius and Mede, and in support of his own, regarding which historical episodes corresponded to which aspects of the visions. It is interesting to note how More described the section against Grotius as a “Confutation”, containing sarcasm and accusations of prejudice, whereas the section about Mede was an “Apologie”, with respectful comments and gentle disagreement.²¹²

More’s interpretations on the prophecies of the apocalypse clearly engendered debate among his readers because in 1684 he published *An Answer to Several Remarks upon Dr Henry More his Expositions of the Apocalypse and Daniel, as also upon his Apology written by S. E. Mennonite, and published in English by the Answerer*.²¹³ More set out about one hundred and fifty “remarks” he had received in a letter from

²⁰⁷ More, *AARJ*, ‘Preface’, p. xxix.

²⁰⁸ Almond, ‘Apocalypse’, p. 193.

²⁰⁹ More, *EPD*, ‘Preface’, p. xv.

²¹⁰ More, *EPD*, ‘Preface’, pp. xv-xvi.

²¹¹ See More, *EPD*, II, pp. 23-62, esp. pp. 33-5.

²¹² More, *EPD*, ‘The Threefold Appendage’, pp. 243-305 passim.

²¹³ More, *ASR*. More nicknamed his correspondent “*Mennonite*”, after the Protestant Anabaptist and pacifist sect, because of his “odd wild conceit [...] that all *Magistracy* and *Monarchy* consequentially, will go down in the *Millennial Reign* of Christ.” ‘Preface’, sig. A2-A2v.

the mysterious “S. E.” together with his answers. The book also included ‘Arithmetica Apocalyptica’ and ‘Appendicula Apocalyptica’, which contained More’s responses to other queries and opinions he had received. More declared in *An Answer to Several Remarks* that his interpretation was the most robust and intelligible and therefore had to be published to protect the public from misunderstanding, to protect Christianity from abuse by “profane Wits” and to protect the stability of the state from the misappropriation of the prophecies by political radicals. More stated that apocalyptic interpretations should not even be attempted by “*Fanatical Enthusiasts*” but only by “men of a more *rational* Genius, *serene* mind and *sober* judgment”—meaning those like himself. Without any shred of irony, More haughtily described “S. E.” as “Magisterial as if he were [...] some infallible Judge or decisive Oracle in the case.”²¹⁴ “S. E.” responded anonymously in 1690, complaining he had written his original ‘Remarks’ for More’s private consideration and had no expectation that they would be published without his consent. He then devoted three-hundred pages to a public defence of his interpretation, highlighting More’s “Errors” in return.²¹⁵

An Illustration of those Two Abstruse Books in Holy Scripture, the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of S. John was published in 1685. The first part was primarily an abridgement of *A Plain and Continued Exposition* and the second part was a restructured version of *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos*. The book was published in the same year as More’s *Paralipomena Prophetica* (1685) so it is possible that the two books were produced at the same time by More as a final version of his extensive interpretations of the apocalyptic prophecies of the Bible. On the other hand, it is a possibility that the *Illustration* was compiled by the publisher rather than More himself for three reasons: firstly the title page described the work as “*framed out of the Expositions of*” rather than “by” Henry More; secondly it contained no significant new material whereas More had a tendency to tinker by adding Notes, Scholia or

²¹⁴ More, *ASR*, ‘Preface’, sig. A2-b2v.

²¹⁵ Anonymous [S. E.], *Remarks on Dr. Henry More’s Expositions of the Apocalypse and Daniel, and upon his Apology: Defended against his Answer to them* (London: T.M., 1690), ‘An Advertisement’ sig. A4v; ‘Preface’ sig. a4v. The author confirmed his initials were genuinely S. E., that he was not a foreigner, and that More knew his identity; however, it remains unclear who he was.

extra chapters to subsequent editions; and thirdly the Preface was uncharacteristically brief.²¹⁶

Paralipomena Prophetica (1685) contained More's previously unpublished expositions on the biblical prophecies, answering objections (both recent and ancient) to the visions of Daniel and the Apocalypse and thus through his interpretations, rendering the prophecies intelligible. More's objective was to recover the prophecies for the Church of England from misappropriation by destabilising enthusiasts, whether they be "sullen Melancholists or Histrionical *Mock-Prophets*... [or] that false Boast of the Roman Church" and thus aid "the general Peace of Christendom".²¹⁷ Further, More argued that interpretation of the prophecies proved the "truth of Christianity beyond all doubt" and served as a form of natural theology: "viz. for the Existence of God and of Angels, and for a Divine Providence over the affairs of men, and a reward after this life, according to what we have done, whether it be good or evil".²¹⁸

Early in 1685, Baxter published *A paraphrase on the New Testament with notes, doctrinal and practical*, in which he explained the "difficulties" he saw with the "great diversity of Opinions" and set out the points he could not reconcile.²¹⁹ Although Baxter mentioned More only once, More clearly took it quite personally and responded with a short but angry treatise *Some Cursory Reflexions impartially made upon Mr. Richard Baxter his way of Writing Notes on the Apocalypse, and upon his Advertisement and Postscript* (1685) under the pseudonym 'Phililicrines Parrhesiastes'. More accused Baxter of committing "an enormous Outrage", damaging the "Spirit of Prophecy", and restated his interpretation against each of the

²¹⁶ Henry More, *An Illustration of those Two Abstruse Books in Holy Scripture, the Book of Daniel and the Revelation of S. John, by Continued, Brief, but Clear Notes, from Chapter to Chapter, and from Verse to Verse: with very usefull and apposite Arguments prefix to each Chapter; framed out of the Expositions of Dr. Henry More*, (London: M. Flesher for Walter Kettilby, 1685), title page, 'Preface, sig. B-B2v.

²¹⁷ More, *PP-SSD*, 'Preface', pp. i, iii, x-xiii, xxviii-xxix.

²¹⁸ More, *PP-SSD*, p. 3.

²¹⁹ Richard Baxter, *A paraphrase on the New Testament with notes, doctrinal and practical, by plainness and brevity fitted to the use of religious families, in their daily reading of the Scriptures : and of the younger and poorer sort of scholars and ministers, who want fuller helps : with an advertisement of difficulties in the Revelations*, (London: B. Simmons and Tho. Simmons, 1685), 'An Advertisement', sig. Q2v, Q2v-S2v.

points that Baxter had “vomited [...] up altogether without any Digestion”.²²⁰ More was vituperative about Baxter, using words such as “ineptness”, “*Folly*”, “*Weakness and Ignorance*”, “*absurd if not impious*”, “mawkish, raw, and dough-bak’d Fancies”, “*prophane Buffonry*”, and “*Trash*”. More even stooped to personal insults, commenting on Baxter’s portrait, “behold [...] an *huge, massi[v]e Nose*, devoid of all *Sagacity* under it.”²²¹

2.14 1669-86: Catholic Idolatry

In 1669-73 the tension between Catholics and Protestants intensified, prompting More to revisit his anti-Catholic arguments. King Charles II’s brother and heir, James, the Duke of York, was thought to have taken the Eucharist in a Roman Catholic Church in 1668 or 1669. More wrote *An Antidote against Idolatry* (1669) primarily to demonstrate how Protestantism was sacred compared with “the barbarous and idolatrous Tyrannie of the Church of *Rome*.”²²² The treatise was dedicated to John Robartes [1606-1685], Baron of Truro and Lord Privy Seal, recently appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a country of Catholics under English Protestant domination.²²³ More explained his dedication as a combination of a “private Obligation from particular Favours”, to attest Robartes’s excellent virtues, and to obtain his patronage and support.²²⁴ It may be that Robartes was one of More’s protectors during the post-Restoration purge at Cambridge (More had taught three of his sons). Interestingly, it was Robartes that had brought John Mompesson [1623-1696], the suffering homeowner in the Drummer of Tedworth case, to the King in 1663.²²⁵

More continued his medical metaphors from *An Antidote Against Atheism* and *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* in *An Antidote Against Idolatry*, referring to idolatry as “a very sore and grievous Disease of the Soul, vilely debasing her and sinking her

²²⁰ More, *SCR*, ‘Preface’, sig. A-Av., pp. 6, 8-9.

²²¹ More, *SCR*, ‘Preface’, sig. Av, A4, and pp. 1, 4, 7, 15, 21.

²²² More, *ESESC*, ‘To the Right Honourable, *John Lord Robarts*’, sig. A5.

²²³ Anne Duffin, ‘Robartes, John, first earl of Radnor (1606–1685)’, *ODNB* (Oxford University Press, 2004) [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23707>, last accessed 20th November 2014].

²²⁴ More, *ESESC*, ‘To the Right Honourable, *John Lord Robarts*’, sig. A3-A3v.

²²⁵ Nicolson, *Conway Letters* (1930, 1992), p. 237 especially note 7 & Henry More to Anne Conway, letter dated 31 March 1663, in *Conway Letters* (1932, 1992), pp. 215-6.

into *Sensuality* and *Materiality*, keeping her at a distance from the true sense and right knowledge of God”.²²⁶ More outlined Roman Catholic practices he deemed idolatrous, such as the worshipping of graven images. This was expressly forbidden by the second Commandment but seemed to be encouraged by the Council of Trent.²²⁷ More also argued that transubstantiation was impossible “according to [...] *Physicks, Metaphysicks, Mathematicks* and *Logick*” and was “as grosse a piece of Idolatry as ever was committed by any of the Heathens”.²²⁸ Therefore More argued the reformed Protestant church should be clearly separated from the idolatrous Church of Rome, which he linked to the apocalyptic “Whore of *Babylon*”.²²⁹

In 1672 the Catholic apologist John Walton [1624-1677] anonymously published *A brief answer to the many calumnies of Dr. Henry More, in his pretended Antidote against idolatry*. Walton acknowledged More’s reputation as a philosopher, but claimed that “the Authors fancy being broken loose from the command of Reason, [...] His most formidable Weapon is that harsh and unmanly Rhetorick, called railing. [...] His Objections are bold, uncivil, irreligious; not without a deep tincture of *Geneva*.”²³⁰ Walton countered almost all of More’s many accusations of Catholic idolatry, for example justifying the adoration of the Host because it was the worship of “Jesus Christ in the Sacrament”, and accused More of wilfully misunderstanding the Council of Trent.²³¹

Accusations of unreason, rhetoric and Calvinism provoked More to respond immediately with *A brief reply to a late answer to Dr. Henry More his Antidote against Idolatry* (1672). More reprinted the text of *An Antidote Against Idolatry* interspersed with “Answers” from and “Replies” to Walton. Regarding the adoration of the Host, More expanded on his existing arguments (writing five times as much as he wrote in the original chapter) including a demonstration by physics against transubstantiation. More explained any “Railing” on his part had been against the

²²⁶ More, *AI*, ii p. 14.

²²⁷ More, *AI*, vii pp. 78-9.

²²⁸ More, *AI*, iii pp. 44, 40-52, 42.

²²⁹ More, *AI*, ‘To the Reader’, sig N8.

²³⁰ John Walton, *A brief answer to the many calumnies of Dr. Henry More, in his pretended Antidote against idolatry*. (London?: s.n., 1672), pp. 2-3.

²³¹ Walton, *A brief answer*, pp. 45, 45-62.

“*barbarous murder*” by the Church of Rome of people who refused to commit idolatry.²³²

In 1673 Parliament introduced the Test Act, under which civil and military officials had to take an oath denouncing transubstantiation as idolatrous and receive the Anglican Holy Communion. James refused, therefore making his suspected Catholicism public, and he married a Catholic, the Italian princess Mary of Modena in September 1673. In the same year, More published *An Appendix to the late Antidote against Idolatry* (1673) presenting fifty points against idolatry. Some were accusations against “Papist” practices, including burning incense as sacrifice, praying for intercession and “Bread-worship” (transubstantiation); some were vindications of Anglican practices, such as kissing the Bible, bowing towards the altar, and the Holy Communion; and the final few points were warnings against ‘spiritual idolatry’, which he defined as those behaviours condemned by Saint Paul, “*Fornication, Uncleaness, Inordinate affection, evil Concupiscence, and Covetousness*”.²³³

For the postscript to More’s anti-Catholic crusade, we return to the subject over a decade later, when Charles II died in early 1685 after converting to Catholicism on his deathbed. Charles’s Catholic brother, now James II (James VII in Scotland), succeeded to the throne and immediately faced and defeated rebellions in the West Country and Scotland, subsequently maintaining a standing army. Catholic apologist literature increased in circulation with James’s encouragement.²³⁴ In response, the seventy-two year old More published a short book against transubstantiation entitled *A Brief Discourse of the Real Presence of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Celebration of the Holy Eucharist* (1686). It was quickly followed by a second edition (also in 1686) that included a couple of pages of additional notes at the end and was reissued in 1687.²³⁵ More explained that he feared the Catholic treatises would confuse Anglicans or draw them in into believing the real presence of Christ

²³² More, *BR-AI*, iii pp. 121, 115-55 & x pp. 295.

²³³ More, *AAI*, pp. passim, and 53, 53-9. From *AKJV*, Colossians 3:5.

²³⁴ For example James Benigne Bossuet, trans. from the French, *An exposition of the doctrine of the Catholic Church in matters of controverse*, 5th edition (London: 1685) and 9th edition (London: Henry Hills, 1686), which was “Published by his Majesties Command”; and Louis Maimbourg, trans. A. Lovel, *An historical treatise of the foundation and prerogatives of the Church of Rome and of her bishops*, (London: Jos. Hindmarsh, 1685), printed for a “Bookseller to His Royal Highness”.

²³⁵ More, *BDRP*, sig. N-N4v.

in the host.²³⁶ Specifically, More rejected the literal transubstantiation argument of James-Bénigne Bossuet [1627-1704], the Bishop of Meaux. More expanded many of his earlier arguments, for example one chapter extends the metaphysical discussion of the impossibility of transubstantiation with reference to biblical miracles such as the transfiguration and resurrection of Jesus.²³⁷ More also tackled the “ingenious and artfully composed Treatise” of the Catholic priest John Gother [d. 1704]. Gother had listed a string of biblical miracles and then argued that More’s metaphysical refutation of transubstantiation was no challenge to the omnipotence of God.²³⁸ More therefore offered some further arguments, including the figurative interpretation of Jesus’s words “This is my body”, and that God’s “*Wisdom* and *Goodness*” would prevent the presentation of such a deceptive miracle where both mind and senses argue that nothing has changed and “that it is *still Bread*”.²³⁹

More felt a sense of duty to defend the Anglican Church from the “Entanglements” of the Catholic propaganda “so far as my Age, and Infirmness of my Body will permit”.²⁴⁰ In fact, this was the last book More published and he died the following year in September 1687. The lasting significance of his criticism of the Catholic Church earned his *Opera Omnia* a place on the Catholic *Index of Prohibited Books* in 1696.²⁴¹

²³⁶ More, *BDRP*, i pp. 4-5.

²³⁷ More, *BDRP*, iv pp. 26-34.

²³⁸ More, *BDRP*, iii p. 17; J.L. [John Gother], *A Papist Mis-represented and Represented: or, A Twofold Character of Popery* (London: s.n., 1685), section 5, pp. 11-2.

²³⁹ More, *BDRP*, iii pp. 19-20.

²⁴⁰ More, *BDRP*, i p. 2.

²⁴¹ Reid, *Metaphysics*, p. 12.

3 Henry More's methodology concerning his use of "miraculous and supernaturall effects"

3.1 Scope

This chapter will review Henry More's methodology concerning his use of miraculous and supernatural effects in his published works. This includes an overview of his method and a statistical examination and analysis of the cases, their themes, referencing and sources. Finally, I shall analyse More's level of scepticism by reviewing his criteria, noting the degree to which contemporaries criticized his use of cases, and assessing his reaction to such criticism by the addition and excision of cases.

More's private correspondence is invaluable for the insight it provides into the man responsible for this vast corpus of case material, and there seems to be no significant divergence between his published and private opinions on the supernatural. The cases discussed in the letters that he considered most worthwhile, such as Coker, Greatrakes and Tedworth, were added into his published material, so it is not necessary to include the few remaining cases from the private letters in this assessment. For example, Anne Conway and More discussed 'tree-geese' in a letter in 1654, which More had already reported in *An Antidote against Atheism* (1653), and he asked if she could obtain a "perfect narration" of their generation from her husband's brother-in-law, Major George Rawdon.¹ Not all of Conway's replies survive so we do not know whether she ever met his request, but the case was not changed in any of the subsequent editions and remained attributed to the English herbalist John Gerard [1545-1611/2].²

¹ Henry More to Anne Conway, 8th May 1654, *Conway Letters*, p. 98.

² More, AA, III.xii p. 157 [(1655+), III.xv]. From John Gerard, *The herball or Generall historie of plantes. Gathered by John Gerarde of London Master in Chirurgerie. Very much enlarged and amended by Thomas Johnson citizen and apothecarye of London* (London: Adam Islip Joice Norton and Richard Whitakers, 1633), III.clxxi pp. 1587-9.

Saducismus Triumphatus (1681) is included here not simply because More was the editor, but because he directly contributed so much material. The publisher explained how “The *Number* also of the *Stories* are much increased above what was designed by Mr. *Glanvil*, though none admitted, but such as seemed very well attested and highly credible to his abovesaid Friend [i.e. More]”.³ I am therefore including material from the first and second editions that I am confident originated from More, as set out in Table 1 below. For example, I have judged Relation XXII as sourced by More rather than Glanvill. This is because the account “Contained in a Letter of Mr. *G. Clark*, to Mr. *M. T.* touching an house haunted in *Welton* near *Daventry*” begins “Sir, I Send you here a Relation of a very memorable piece of Witchcraft as I suppose, which would fit Mr. *More* gallantly.”⁴ Some elements are easier to attribute to one or another, and where there is any doubt, I have attributed the section to Glanvill. Julie Davies has also analysed the respective contributors and we only diverge on Relation VII, for which she has found no evidence of Glanvill’s involvement but I can find no clear proof of More’s involvement either, other than his comment that he remembered Greatrakes mentioning the case at Ragley.⁵

³ ‘The Publisher to the Reader’ in Glanvill, *ST*, sig. A3v.

⁴ ‘Relation XXII’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II p. 263.

⁵ Julie Davies, *Science in an Enchanted World: Philosophy and Witchcraft in the Work of Joseph Glanvill* (Oxford & New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 232-5. See also ‘Relation VII’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 168-89 & More, ‘Advertisement following Relation VII’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 189-90.

Table 1: Analysis of Author / Origin within *Saducismus Triumphatus*

Edition	Author / Origin	
	Glanvill	More
1681	To the Illustrious Charles Duke of <i>Richmond</i> and <i>Lenox</i>	Dr. H. M. his Letter with the Postscript, To Mr. J. G.
	Prefaces	All Advertisements
	Some Considerations about Witchcraft. In a Letter to Robert Hunt, Esq	The Easie, True, and Genuine Notion and Consistent Explication of the Nature of a Spirit
	Prefaces	
	Mr. Mompesson's Letters	
	An Introduction to the Proof of the Existence of Apparitions, Spirits and Witches	
	Proof of Apparitions, Spirits, and Witches from Holy-Scripture	
	Relations I, II, III, IV, V, VI, VII	All Advertisements, Relation VIII,
	Relations IX, X, XI, XXIII, XXVIII	All Advertisements, Relations XII, XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XIX, XX, XXI, XXII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII
	An Account of what happened in the Kingdom of Sweden in the Years 1669, and 1670	
1682		An Account of this Second Edition of <i>Saducismus Triumphatus</i>
		All Advertisements
		An Answer to a Letter of a Learned Psychopyrist
	A Whip for the Droll, Fidler to the Atheist: being Reflections on Drollery and Atheism	A Continuation of the Collection: Relations I, II, III, IV, V, VI An Account of what happen'd to a Boy at <i>Malmoe</i> in <i>Schonen</i> in the year 1678

Biblical prophecies, especially the apocalyptic prophecies, are complex composite cases. As More himself explained, the prophecies were deliberately obscure so as to

remain mysterious until they were fulfilled,⁶ and so his work matching elements of prophecy to historical events was highly interpretative and subjective with no clear consensus. Therefore each apocalyptic prophecy, and each biblical prophecy generally considered fulfilled within the biblical era, has been counted as a single case.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Method

More's method was to gather evidence for his conjectures sourced from 'credible' testimonies and 'authorities' of knowledge, rather than setting out to establish objective 'matters of fact' like the empirical experimenters and natural historians of the Royal Society.⁷ More was an armchair theorist—collating experiential accounts from books and letters—rather than a practical investigator. Two principal exceptions to this gave details from his own enquiries: his account of the confession of a witch in Cambridge in 1646; and, his meeting with the stoker Valentine Greatrakes at Ragley in 1665. However, in both cases he was mostly a passive observer, accompanying friends rather than deliberately conducting an investigation on his own initiative or implementing tests. More interspersed the cases within his text as evidence to support the arguments. They range in length from a few words to several pages, but the majority are a couple of sentences long. The cases had to contain enough detail to verify the point of his argument whilst being brief enough to avoid disrupting the flow of the text.

In 1647 More recommended that cases of apparitions and witchcraft should be “publicly recorded, [...] in every Parish”, an approach that “would prove one of the best Antidotes against that earthly and cold disease of Sadducisme and Atheisme”.⁸ This shows how from the outset More considered the systematic collection and publication of cases of supernatural and miraculous effects was the most compelling

⁶ More, *ME-SP*, I.ii, pp. 212-3.

⁷ See for example: Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air-Pump*, pp. 207-24; Peter Dear, 'Miracles, Experiments, and the Ordinary Course of Nature', *Isis*, 81:4 (1990), 663-83; Lorraine Daston, 'Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe', *Critical Inquiry*, 18:1 (1991), 93-124; Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 193-242.

⁸ More, *PP*, 'To the Reader upon this Second Edition' sig. B1v.

solution to the perceived growth of atheism. The idea was echoed by others, such as the unsuccessful attempt from 1657 by clergyman and scholar Matthew Poole [1624-79] to establish a systematic registry of prodigies for religious and moral purposes.⁹ Whilst nothing formal was ever established in England to monitor or collate miraculous and supernatural effects—the Royal Society’s interest was inconsistent¹⁰—More’s friends, readers and correspondents responded to his call by sending and reporting cases. Often a case was introduced with a comment indicating it was from an associate, for example, “A friend of mine told me this story [...]”.¹¹ Although the majority of his cases were sourced from published accounts, as I shall show later in this chapter, at least forty-two cases (5.5%) were unpublished, obtained via conversation or correspondence. As well as Anne Conway, More asked Hartlib to provide him with details of miraculous and supernatural phenomena:

If you desire that I should seriously sett to a disquisition of the nature of spiritts, I must request one favour of you that you would procure me as much of the true history of spiritts as you can, and in particular, if you could have intelligence from any that have been ey[e] witnesses of the late prodigies in Germanie England or other parts such as men fighting in the ayr and such like, it will gratify me in a double designe that I have in hand. I would desire also to be fully certifyde of the windes that the witches in Lapland and those northern parts are sayd to sell to merchants whether it be true or no. As also of the spiritts that are sayd to appear in the stanneries in the west parts of England. and lastly an assurance *that* the Divell or some spiritt dos visibly appear to the Americans. For *the* beleif of spiritts seeming so extremely ridiculous to many, it will be no les ridiculous to adventure to discourse upon their nature, before we be assurd of their existence.¹²

⁹ William E. Burns, *An Age of Wonders: Prodigies, politics and providence in England 1657-1727* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 12-9.

¹⁰ Burns, *Wonders*, pp. 57-97.

¹¹ More, AA, III.ii p. 109.

¹² Henry More to Samuel Hartlib, letter undated [1650? 1651?], Ref 18/1/42A-43B, 18/1/42A, (University of Sheffield, 2008) [<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/hartlib/browse.jsp?id=18%2F1%2F42a-43b%3A%2042b%2C%2043b%20blank>, accessed 08:30 30th August 2013]. This letter is partially transcribed in Crocker, *Henry More*, p. 129.

The ‘double design’ was not explained by More, but Crocker suggests it referred to the subsequent *An Antidote against Atheism* and to a ‘natural history of spirits’, which was put to use in *Saducismus Triumphatus*.¹³ However, the latter was Glanvill’s project and some thirty years in the future. More used contemporary cases of miraculous and supernatural phenomena in several of his major works long before 1681. I suggest rather that the ‘double design’ was the use of the cases to prove the existence of spirit in defence of God, as in *An Antidote against Atheism*, and to demonstrate the metaphysical nature of spirit, as in *The Immortality of the Soul*. There is no evidence in the extant correspondence that More received any cases from Hartlib, and he never cited him as a source. All of the cases More mentioned in his letter, except the spirits in granaries, appeared in his works, including cases of battles in the air,¹⁴ the sale of magic winds by the witches of Lapland,¹⁵ and the appearance of a bloodthirsty Devil to people in Florida.¹⁶

3.2.2 Criteria and Circumspection

Hall claims that “In his eagerness to prove the real existence of spiritual entities active in the universe, More allowed himself no discrimination in the evidence relating to them”,¹⁷ but this is not entirely fair. Certainly More did not adhere to the proverb “less is more”, and had a tendency to bombard his readers with multiple cases to support each point. Perhaps Robert Boyle had More in mind when he advised Joseph Glanvill in 1677 to focus his efforts on a single convincing case; “any one relation of a supernatural phenomenon being fully proved, and duly verified, suffices to evince the thing contended for; and, consequently, to invalidate some of the atheists plausiblest arguments: and, indeed, the foundation of them”.¹⁸ However, in *An Antidote against Atheism*, More recognised the need to set out the authenticity and credibility of cases of miraculous and supernatural effects because in

¹³ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 129, 141 n. 13.

¹⁴ More, AA, III.ix pp. 139-40 [(1655+), III.xii]. From Willebrord Snel van Royen, [Willebrordi Snellii, ‘Snellius’], *Descriptio cometae, qui anno 1618 mense Novembri primum effulsit* (Leiden: 1619), x pp. 61-2.

¹⁵ More, AA, III.ii p. 111. From Olaus Magnus, *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555) translated as *A Compendious History of the Goths, Swedes & Vandals and Other Northern Nations* (London: J. Streater, 1658) III.xv p. 47.

¹⁶ More, GMG, III.xiv p. 86 and More, DD-123, III.xvi pp. 408-9. Source not identified.

¹⁷ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 133.

¹⁸ Robert Boyle to Joseph Glanvill, 18th September 1677, in *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, eds. Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio, and Lawrence M. Principe (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001), vol. IV, p. 456.

the past “false miracles” had been presented by “*Religionists*” and the “disturbed *Phansy*” of “*Melancholick* persons”. He argued there must have been “*true Miracles*” in the past or the “Priests and cunning Deluders of the people” could not have convinced anyone with their fakes.¹⁹ To judge if cases were genuine, and to avoid being fooled or mistaken, More suggested applying strict criteria just as one might test a metal to determine whether it was true silver or gold:

But you'l say there is a *Touch-stone* whereby we may discern the truth of *Metalls*, but that there is nothing whereby we may discover the truth of *Miracles* recorded every where in History. But I answer there is; and it is this.

First if what is recorded was avouched by such persons who had *no end* nor *interest* in avouching such things.

Secondly if there were many *Eye-witnesses* of the same Matter.

Thirdly and lastly if these things which are so strange and miraculous leave any sensible *effect* behind them.

Though I will not acknowledge that all those stories are *false* that want these conditions, yet I dare affirme that it is mere humour and sullenness in a man to reject the *truth* of those that have them; For it is to believe nothing but what he seeth himself: From whence it will follow that he is to read nothing of History, for there is neither pleasure nor any usefullnesse of it, if it deserve no belief.²⁰

More applied these criteria generally, though I would not say rigorously, throughout his works. Contrary to Hall’s sweeping comment, there were examples of More proactively discriminating between cases based on his selection criteria. For example, More discussed a reported apparition of a naval battle that failed his first criterion because it might have been distorted or embellished for “Politick designe”: “a *Lion* appearing alone at the end of that *Apparition*, though it may be true for ought I know, yet it makes it obnoxious to *Suspicion* and evasion and so unprofitable for

¹⁹ More, AA, III.i pp. 107-8.

²⁰ More, AA, III.i p. 108. These principles were also stated in More, EM, xxvi p. 336.

my purpose.”²¹ More chose to include accounts of the vomiting of strange objects because of the tangible effects and presence of witnesses—especially credible witnesses such as physicians—and there seemed to be little for an individual to gain (other than attention) by fraud. In cases where objects were found inside the body, More reasoned it could not be “disturbance of *Phansy* [...] or any *Fraud* or *Imposture* [...] For how can an iron *Naile* get betwixt the skin and the flesh, the skin not at all ripped or touch’d? Or how is it possible for any body to swallow down *Knives* and *pieces* of *Iron* a span long?”²² Similarly, when More added the compound case of Johannes Cuntius to the second edition of *An Antidote against Atheism*, he explained how his source, Silesian physician and philosopher Martin Weinrich [1548-1609], was close in place and time to verify the accuracy of the reported events. He also judged that the account met his criteria: first, the townsfolk were unlikely to have invented the story for personal gain because it scared away travellers and traders causing financial hardship; second, there were many eye-witnesses; and, third, there were real effects in the form of the injuries sustained by Cuntius’s victims.²³ Finally, More accepted the validity of biblical cases, citing the existence of corroborating testimony from independent ‘heathen’ and Jewish writers and the eye-witness role of the apostles. He also argued that the early Christians would have revered the gospels and thus not meddled with the text, and furthermore “a special Providence would keep off both *chance* and *fraud* from wronging so Sacred Writings in any thing materiall”.²⁴

3.3 Case Distribution and Origin

There are 763 cases of miraculous and supernatural effects across all editions of More’s published works (see Table 2 below).²⁵ In assessing the cases, most fall unambiguously into one of four thematic clusters: miracles, providence and prophecy; independence and immortality of the incorporeal soul; nature and powers

²¹ More, AA, III.ix p. 140 [(1655+), III.xii].

²² More, AA, III.v pp. 119-22.

²³ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.viii-ix pp. 208, 220 & 223. From Martin Weinrich [Martini Weinrichii], ‘Proaemium’ [Preface] in Giovanni Francesco Pico della Mirandola, *Dialogus Strix sive de Ludificatione Daemonum* (Argentorati [Strasbourg]: 1612), pp. 13-46.

²⁴ More, GMG, VII.ix-xi pp. 313-27, 326.

²⁵ This figure includes a minority of 79 cases repeated across different works, but cases are only counted once within a single work, even if repeated.

of angels, demons and witches; and the Spirit of Nature and plastic power of the soul. There were some instances when the appropriate cluster is less straightforward to identify, for example ominous apparitions cited as examples of divine providence, or a witch's soul travelling outside of her body cited as an example of the independence of the soul.²⁶ Such cases are few in number, and I resolved each by classifying them in accordance with More's purpose for reporting the case—in the two examples above, these were providence and the independence of the soul.

Undertaking this statistical analysis immediately reveals three key features that are not clear from existing research on More, demonstrating why this new research is necessary. Firstly, although almost 90% of all the cases are in just ten works (consolidated across all editions), the cases were spread out across a large number and variety of works. The cases were not just concentrated in the early natural theological works and *Saducismus Triumphatus*, as one might expect from the existing secondary literature. Only a third of More's works did not contain any applicable cases at all, including *Enchiridion Ethicum*. The data shows that the use of cases of supernatural phenomena was a routine and fairly consistent feature of More's philosophical, metaphysical and theological exposition. Secondly, there were more cases of miracles, providence and prophecy (39.97%) than any other theme, more than two other themes (the independence and immortality of the incorporeal soul, and the Spirit of Nature and plastic power of the soul) combined. More's detailed analysis of biblical miracles and apocalyptic prophecies in his theological works has been largely overlooked because the focus of social historians on witchcraft has skewed the picture of More's use of miraculous and supernatural effects. Thirdly, over 30% of all the cases are in a *Grand Mystery of Godliness* (1660) alone, yet this work is not referenced at all by Hall, Crocker or Coudert in their assessment of More on spirits and the supernatural, again because of their focus on witchcraft.

²⁶ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 219 from Girolamo Cardano, [Hieronymi Cardani], *De Rerum Varietate Libri XVII* (Avignon: 1558), XV.lxxx pp. 748-9; More, *IS*, II.xv p. 278 from Jean Bodin [Io Bodini], *De Magorum Daemonomania, libri IV [Demon-Mania]* (Basel: 1581), II.v, pp. 173-4. This chapter is not included in the 2001 modern English translation.

Table 2: Cases by Theme ranked by Total by Work

Work	Theme				Total by Work	% of Total
	Miracles, providence and prophecy	Independence and immortality of the incorporeal soul	Nature and powers of angels, demons and witches	Spirit of Nature and plastic power of the soul		
<i>GMG</i>	139	13	54	29	235	30.80%
<i>AA</i>	15	32	80	6	133	17.43%
<i>IS</i>	4	33	5	35	77	10.09%
<i>ST</i>	4	15	33	1	53	6.95%
<i>DD</i>	25	4	11	8	48	6.29%
<i>PP (PS)</i>		22	13	8	43	5.64%
<i>ME-MI</i>	29	1	7		37	4.85%
<i>CC</i>	14	1	4	2	21	2.75%
<i>ET</i>	4			15	19	2.49%
<i>ME-SP</i>	13	1	4		18	2.36%
<i>EPD</i>	10	1	4		15	1.97%
<i>BDRP</i>	12	1			13	1.70%
<i>AARJ</i>	10				10	1.31%
<i>TA</i>	1		1	7	9	1.18%
<i>DH</i>	7		1		8	1.05%
<i>AHM</i>	4	1	3		8	1.05%
<i>PP-SSD</i>	4		1		5	0.66%
<i>ESESC</i>	3				3	0.39%
<i>ASR</i>	2				2	0.26%
<i>SCR</i>	2				2	0.26%
<i>AI</i>	2				2	0.26%
<i>OAT</i>				1	1	0.13%
<i>OO</i>	1				1	0.13%
Total by Theme	305	125	221	112	763	100%
% by Theme	39.97%	16.38%	28.96%	14.68%	100.00%	

The purpose of each of these works has already been set out in chapter two, but there are some important similarities and differences between the works and the way More used the cases. The key unifying feature in More's works was the inclusion of the cases within the body of his text as and when they served to support an argument or illustrate a principle. In contrast, the 'relations' in Glanvill's *Saducismus Triumphatus* were presented separately from the main argument. However, in the

sections added by More, such as ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter with the Postscript, To Mr. J. G.’ and the ‘advertisements’ before each ‘relation’, More’s style is clearly evident with an additional eighteen cases intermingled with his commentary and explanations. Of course, there are long sections in More’s works that do not contain any cases and comprise purely philosophical or theological discussion, such as the first two hundred pages of *The Immortality of the Soul*, but my point here is that More did not segregate his case material from his argument.

As clearly shown in Table 2, the variation of themes across More’s works was an obvious consequence of the differing focus of each work. For example, there are more cases of angels, demons and witches in *An Antidote against Atheism* and more cases of miracles, providence and prophecy in theological works such as *A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity*. However, it is also clear from the analysis that some of the theological works contain a diverse range of cases as a result of the connectedness inherent in More’s metaphysics between the nature of divine power, the soul, demons and the Spirit of Nature.

Although 79 cases are repeated across different works, the vast majority of the cases are presented only once, giving an impressive total of 616 unique cases. The duplicates are most often biblical cases: for example the apocalyptic visions of Daniel are mentioned in ten separate works. The sheer size of More’s case collection reflects his life-long interest in cases of miraculous and supernatural effects and their fundamental importance to him as evidence. More sometimes signposted his self-restraint in limiting the number of cases with comments such as this one, at the end of a brief chapter on weather magic: “I might be infinite in such narrations, but I will moderate my self”; elsewhere he paused towards the end of a discussion of the ‘miracles’ of Pythagoras to comment “To these and many others which I willingly omit, I shall only adde [a few more examples]”.²⁷

The majority of cases can be dated to historical periods and regions, and they were deliberately broad-ranging. The wide chronological and geographical range demonstrated that the phenomena were not merely the result of some cultural bias;

²⁷ More, AA, III.iii p. 115; More, CC, ‘The Defence of the of the Philosophick Cabbala’, iii p. 187.

“We reade such things happening even in all Ages and places of the world; and there are modern and fresh examples every day: so that no man need doubt of the truth.”²⁸ I have linked over 92% of the cases to a historical period. Sometimes this was straightforward, for example if the subject was a known historical figure such as the medieval Iberian Arab physician, Ibn Zuhr [Latinized to ‘Avenzoar’ Albumaron, 1094-1162].²⁹ Of the total, 36.17% were early modern, 31.32% were biblical, 20.58% were from the classical era or earlier (i.e. Ancient Greece, the Roman Empire, Egypt), and 4.59% from the medieval period. The distribution of historical periods was diverse across the natural philosophical works and *Grand Mystery of Godliness*; however, biblical cases dominated in the many of the theological works. Some works had exclusively biblical cases because of their specific focus, for example *Apocalypsis Apocalypseos*.

It was slightly more difficult to be sure of identifying the geographic region, but I have traced over 80% of the cases to a general region. Of the total, 44.04% were from Europe, 28.44% from the Middle East region (mostly biblical cases), 5.24% from Africa (mostly Egypt), 2.10% from India and Far East and 1.31% from the New World. Of the total, only 11.14% were cases from Britain and Ireland (included in the figure for Europe). The geographic distribution mirrors the pattern for historical periods, with more diversity in the natural philosophical works, and a Middle Eastern (biblical) focus for the theological works. The diverse geographical and chronological ranges of his cases demonstrate how, although More was an armchair investigator, his extensive reading enabled him to considerably broaden his worldview.

3.4 Source Distribution and Origin

More used a diverse range of sources for his cases of miraculous and supernatural phenomena. The largest single source was the Bible, accounting for two hundred and thirty-nine cases (31.32%). The next largest single source was the Greek sophist Flavius Philostratus [c. 170 to c. 247 CE] with thirty-seven cases (4.85%) from his

²⁸ More, *DD-123*, I.xxiii p. 93.

²⁹ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 271 and More, *IS*, II.xvi pp. 286-7. From Marsilio Ficino, *Theologia Platonica de Immortalitate Animorum Duo de Viginti Libris* (Paris: 1559), XVI.v p. 299r.

biography of Apollonius, followed by Martin Weinrich with thirty-one cases (4.06%). Most of the sources were early modern European authors (41.94%), but a significant minority were classical writers (15.86%), as can be seen in Table 3 below. In general, More sourced case material from recognised experts in the field: for example he sourced fifteen cases (1.97%) concerning Muhammad from the Spanish scholar and former Muslim, Juan Andrés [active 1487-1515]. More took fifty-six cases (7.34%) from the continental demonologists, Dutch physician Johann Weyer [1515-1588], French jurist and philosopher Jean Bodin [1530-1596] and French magistrate Nicholas Rémy [1530-1616]. More sourced many cases from early modern natural philosophers, including fifty-one cases (6.68%) from Cardano, German polymath Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim [1486-1535], Belgian physician Thomas Feyens [1567-1631], and German physician Daniel Sennert [1572-1637]. He took twenty-one cases (2.75%) from the Roman natural philosopher Pliny the Elder [Gaius Plinius Secundus, 23-79 CE]. The top British contributors were the contemporary pamphleteer Edmund Bower [active 1653] with twelve cases (1.57%) relating to the witch Anne Bodenham [c.1573-1653], and six cases (0.79%) of delusion from the Oxford scholar Robert Burton [1577-1640]. The distribution of cases by chronological period of source (see Table 3 below) was obviously very similar to that of the cases themselves, with the vast majority coming from contemporary sources or the Bible.

Table 3: Cases by Chronological Period of Source ranked by Total by Work

Work	Chronological Period of Source						Total by Work	% of Total
	Early Modern	Bible	Classical	Not identified	Medieval	Various *		
<i>GMG</i>	56	103	66	8	2		235	30.80%
<i>AA</i>	114	4	5	8	2		133	17.43%
<i>IS</i>	59		12	4	2		77	10.09%
<i>ST</i>	45	7		1			53	6.95%
<i>DD</i>	8	23	9	6	1	1	48	6.29%
<i>PP (PS)</i>	18	3	7	12	3		43	5.64%
<i>ME-MI</i>		6	6	25			37	4.85%
<i>CC</i>		10	10			1	21	2.75%
<i>ET</i>	17	2					19	2.49%
<i>ME-SP</i>	2	12	4				18	2.36%
<i>EPD</i>		15					15	1.97%
<i>BDRP</i>		13					13	1.70%
<i>AARJ</i>		10					10	1.31%
<i>TA</i>		2		7			9	1.18%
<i>DH</i>		8					8	1.05%
<i>AHM</i>		8					8	1.05%
<i>PP-SSD</i>		3	2				5	0.66%
<i>ESESC</i>		3					3	0.39%
<i>SCR</i>		2					2	0.26%
<i>AI</i>		2					2	0.26%
<i>ASR</i>		2					2	0.26%
<i>OO</i>	1						1	0.13%
<i>OAT</i>		1					1	0.13%
Total by Period	320	239	121	71	10	2	763	100%
% by Period	41.94%	31.32%	15.86%	9.31%	1.31%	0.26%	100%	

(* = more than one source from different periods were cited by More e.g. both Pliny the Elder and Agrippa)

3.5 Referencing

Hall states that More did not often cite his sources,³⁰ however my analysis shows that More cited his sources for the majority of cases. From 1660 onwards, More implemented a margin note system to provide detailed references for most of the cases and quotes in his works. This margin note style was commonly used by many of the continental authors More read, including Weyer and Cardano. More added

³⁰ Hall, *Henry More*, p. 139.

references in margin notes to the new editions of his earlier works in *A Collection of Several Philosophical Writings* (1662). Therefore one's opinion on More's citation of sources will vary depending which edition one examines. Based on a consolidated view of the editions, I have analysed the referencing and classified the cases into one of six groups: specific detailed references (i.e. author or work, and sometimes book, chapter or section); general references (author or work only); unreferenced biblical cases (that contemporaries probably would have easily recognised and thus arguably did not require referencing); More's own personal experiences; previously unpublished testimony from More's correspondents, acquaintances and accounts he had heard about (twenty-nine sources were named); and, finally, those cases with no references provided at all. At the least generous interpretation, i.e. excluding the unreferenced biblical cases, More provided references to his sources for 491 cases (64.35%) and at best 602 cases (78.90%). This analysis therefore demonstrates that More's general practice was to reference his sources in some way, but acknowledges this was not consistent. The main exceptions to referencing were *The Præexistence of the Soul*, where diligent referencing would have disrupted the poetic flow and thus 90% of cases were unreferenced, and to a lesser degree *A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity*, in which 70% of the cases were Catholic 'false miracles' that More was ridiculing and so perhaps he regarded them as unworthy of references.

Table 4: Cases by Reference Category ranked by Total by Work

Work	Reference Category						Total by Work
	Specific	General	Unreferenced Biblical Cases	Self	Unpublished testimony	None	
<i>GMG</i>	87	77	40			31	235
<i>AA</i>	69	36	3	1	7	17	133
<i>IS</i>	54	8			1	14	77
<i>ST</i>	3	11	4		33	2	53
<i>DD</i>	18	7	9	2		12	48
<i>PP (PS)</i>		2	2			39	43
<i>ME-MI</i>	9		2			26	37
<i>CC</i>	16	3	2				21
<i>ET</i>	5	8	2	2		2	19
<i>ME-SP</i>	12	2	3			1	18
<i>EPD</i>	4		11				15
<i>BDRP</i>	4		9				13
<i>AARJ</i>	1		9				10
<i>TA</i>	1	2	1		1	4	9
<i>DH</i>			8				8
<i>AHM</i>	8						8
<i>PP-SSD</i>	2	3					5
<i>ESESC</i>	2		1				3
<i>SCR</i>			2				2
<i>AI</i>			2				2
<i>ASR</i>	2						2
<i>OO</i>				1			1
<i>OAT</i>			1				1
Total by Ref Cat	297	159	111	6	42*	148	763
% by Ref Cat	38.93%	20.84%	14.55%	0.79%	5.50%	19.40%	100%

(* = More provided the name of his source for twenty-nine of these cases)

More's margin note reference format, citing the author, work and book or chapter section, was first introduced in *Grand Mystery of Godliness* in 1660. This is most easily illustrated with an example from *An Antidote against Atheism*, in which More included three cases of "skirmishings in the Aire". In the first and second edition, the first case was unreferenced and 'general references' were provided for the other two by naming the authors in the text.

for at *Alborough in Suffolke* 1642 were heard in the *Aire* very loud beatings of *Drums*, shooting of *Muskets*, and *Ordinance*, as also in

other such like Prodigies there hath been heard the sounding of *Trumpets*, as *Snellius* writes. And *Pliny* also makes mention of the sounding of *trumpets* and *clashing* of *Armour* heard out of the Heavens about the *Cymbrick Wars*, and often before. But here at *Alborough* all was concluded with a melodious noise of *Musical Instruments*.³¹

In the third edition of 1662, the text itself was unaltered in this section (aside from minor adjustments to punctuation and spelling), but More added an asterisk before the name of Pliny the Elder, and a margin note providing a specific reference “**Hist. Natural. lib. 2. cap. 57.*”. This margin note reference format was More’s standard from 1660 onwards and took a Latinized form even in the English editions. However, not every case was referenced. In the example above, we do not know why More added the specific reference for only one of the three cases. The case from the Dutch astronomer Willebrord Snellius [1580-1626] was not given a specific reference, perhaps because it was overlooked or More did not have the source to hand. The Suffolk case, probably from John Vicars, remained unreferenced, perhaps because it was a well-known recent case in the locality of East Anglia.

More’s references can also provide clues about exactly which editions of his sources he used. For example, the case of the evil spirit called ‘Eckerken’ that attacked travellers in the Duchy of Cleves, was unreferenced until the third edition of *An Antidote against Atheism* in 1662 when More added a margin note reference, “*Wierus de Praestig. Daemon. l.6.c.15.*”. This directed readers to the fifteenth chapter of the sixth book of Weyer’s *De Praestigiis Daemonum* (1563). However, this case appears in chapter thirteen in the editions published before the revised 1583 edition, indicating that More must have used an edition dated from or after 1583.³²

³¹ More, AA, III.xiii p. 160 [(1655+), III.xvi]. Probably from John Vicars, *Prodigies & Apparitions, or, Englands Warning Pieces*, (London: Tho. Bates [...] by Ralphe Markland, 1643), pp. 49-54; from Pliny the Elder, *The Historie of the World: commonly called, The Naturall Historie of C. Plinius Secundus* [‘*Natural History*’], translated by Philemon Holland, (London: Adam Islip, 1601, 1634), II.lvii p. 28.; probably from Snellius, *Descriptio cometarum*, x p. 61.

³² More, AA, III.vi p. 123 [(1662), p. 100]. From Johann Weyer, *Witches, Devils, and Doctors in the Renaissance: Johann Weyer, De Praestigiis daemonum*, translated by John Shea, edited by George Mora (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Text & Studies, 1991), VI.xv p.521, [Ioannis

In *Conjectura Cabbalistica* and *A Plain and Continued Exposition of the several Prophecies or Divine Visions of the Prophet Daniel*, the discussion reflected the structure of the Bible. For example, the ‘Literal Cabbala’ comprises the text of the first three chapters of Genesis, and the subsequent sections on the ‘Philosophick’ and ‘Moral Cabbala’ follow the same structure. The prophecies of Daniel are set out in separate sections for each vision. Within each section, the individual verses of the relevant biblical text are printed in Blackletter (gothic) font interspersed with More’s analytical commentary in Roman font.

I have traced over 87% of the cases to other published sources, including tracing unreferenced cases to the most plausible source. In my footnotes I provide the details of the source after the reference to More’s works. “From” means More provided a specific or general reference, or the case was easily identifiable from the Bible. “Probably from” means that I have made an educated guess at the source More used. “Source not identified” means I have not yet traced the source of the case. In hunting down More’s sources, I have followed clues in More’s presentation of the cases themselves and given preference to sources he referenced elsewhere. For example, in *The Præexistence of the Soul* More described three unreferenced cases in the exact same order as Agrippa presented them in his *Occult Philosophy*, which was a source I know More definitely used because he referenced it elsewhere, and it is therefore very likely to be the source for these three.³³ Similarly, I have assigned the unreferenced case of the haunted house of Caligula, which was reported in various different texts, to *De vita Caesarum* by the Roman historian Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus [c.69-130CE] because in some other classical cases, More referenced this source specifically.³⁴

Wieri, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1568), VI.xiii pp. 615 and in *Opera Omnia* (Amsterdam: 1660), VI.xv p. 504].

³³ More, *PP (PS)*, pp. 275-6. Probably from Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, *De Occulta Philosophia Libri Tres* (Cologne: 1533 Latin edition) translated into English by J. F. [John French] *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* (London: 1651), III.1 p. 509, modern edition by Donald Tyson ed., (Woodbury, MN, USA: Llewellyn Publications, 1993), p. 629.

³⁴ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 272. Probably from Suetonius [Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus], *De vita Caesarum*, trans. by J. C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914), ‘The Life of Caligula, lix.

3.6 Accuracy

3.6.1 Content

More was generally accurate in relating cases from his sources. His summary of the events and experiences was usually a faithful rendition from his source, with only a handful of minor exceptions that did not alter the substance of the account. For example, More incorrectly described the travelling soul of the Greek poet and miracle-worker, Aristeas [C7th BCE], as taking the shape of a pigeon rather than a raven, even though all of More's likely sources, including Agrippa (from whom he probably took the alternative name 'Atheus' for Aristeas in the *Philosophicall Poems*), Pliny the Elder and Greek historian Herodotus [C5th BCE], refer to it as a raven (*corvus*).³⁵

More's reliance on second and third hand testimony from printed sources left him vulnerable to accidental mistakes or deliberate distortions of the original case. For example, More was particularly convinced by Remy's view on weather magic that storms could be conjured by "power of the *Divell* which he hath in his Kingdome of the *Aire*" because of the "free confession of neer two hundred men that he examined" in Remy's experience as a magistrate. More reported one case as though it was a direct confession heard by Remy, no doubt attracted to the almost experimental demonstration with its tangible effects and multiple witnesses:

Remigius writes that he had it witnessed to him [...] a *Witch*, who to satisfy the curiosity of them that had power to punish her, was set free that she might give a proof of that power she professed she had to raise *Tempests*. She therefore being let go presently betakes her self to a place thick set with Trees, scrapes a *Hole* with her hands *fills it* with *Urine*, and *stirres it about* so long, that she caused at last a thick dark *Cloud* charged with *Thunder* and *Lightning* to the terrour and affrightment of the beholders. But she bade them be of good courage

³⁵ More, *IS*, II.xv, pp. 277-8. Probably from Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651) III.1 p. 509 [(1993), p. 629], from Herodotus, *The History of Herodotus* ['*Histories*'], translated by George Rawlinson (London: J. M. Dent, 1910), IV 13-16, and Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VII.iii p. 184. Both More [in *PP (PS)*, p. 275] and Agrippa referred to 'Aristeas' as 'Atheus'. Jacob also notes the pigeon/raven discrepancy – see Jacob, *IS* (1987), 'Notes', ref. 166/14 p. 386.

for she would command the Cloud to discharge upon what place they would appoint her, which she made good in the sight of the Spectatours.³⁶

Although More copied Remy's account quite faithfully, he seemed to have overlooked the fact that Remy explained the case was sourced from the *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) by the two Dominican friars, Heinrich Kramer [c.1430-1505] and Jacob Sprenger [c.1436-1495]. The case was therefore at least a century earlier than Remy, and in fact there is no exact match among the cases in the *Malleus*. It appears Remy may have conflated the details of two different cases from the *Malleus*, one from the section explicitly on weather magic and another on strategies and questions for judges. The weather magic case from the diocese of Constance matches the details of the witch digging a hole under a tree, stirring the water with her finger and discharging the resultant hailstorm in a specific location. However, the original account concerned two witches confessing to a past event (i.e. it was not independently witnessed).³⁷ The other more likely contender as source was an account of tricking a captured witch into proving her diabolic association by pretending to offer freedom in exchange for teaching and demonstrating her magic. This took place in the diocese of Strasbourg in the castle of Königsheim. However there was no hole dug under a tree, but rather, "When a dish of water was brought to her, the sorceress told him [the spy] to set the water in motion a little with a finger. After she uttered certain words, suddenly in the place mentioned by the spy (a wood adjacent to the castle) a greater downpour of hail than had been seen for many years took place."³⁸

In contrast, there was at least one case that More appears to have traced through to its original source, as evidenced by his inclusion of extra detail absent from the intermediary. More described the case of a deluded man from *The Anatomy of*

³⁶ More, AA, III.iii pp. 112-3. From Nicolas Remy, *Demonolatriy*, edited by Montague Summers and translated by E. A. Ashwin, (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1930, 2008), I.xxv pp. 74-5 [*Daemonolatreiae libri tres* (Lyon: 1595), I.xxv pp. 159-60].

³⁷ Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum* (1487) edited and translated by Christopher S. Mackay, *The Hammer of Witches: A Complete Translation of the Malleus Maleficarum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), II.i.xv pp. 383-5.

³⁸ Kramer & Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, III.xvi p. 559. Mackay notes the site may have been the castle at (High) Königsburg.

Melancholy (1621) by ‘Democritus Junior’ (Burton’s penname). “*Democritus junior* [...] recites severall stories [...] As out of *Laurentius* [...] a Nobleman of his time, a man of reason and discretion in all other things, saving that he did conceit himself made of glasse; and though he loved to be visited by his friends, yet had a speciall care that they should not come too near him, for fear they should break him.”³⁹ Burton’s description was very brief. “Another thinks [...] he is all glass, a pitcher, and will therefore let no bodie come near him, and such a one *Laurentius* gives out upon his credit, that he knew in *France*.”⁴⁰ André du Laurens [‘Laurentius’, 1558-1609] was the physician to the French King Henry IV and had published *Discours de la conservation de la veuë: des maladies melancoliques: des catarrhes, & de la vieillesse* (1594). Du Laurens reported fifteen “histories of certain melancholike persons, which have had strange imaginations”, of which one matched the details of the case More described: “There was also of late a great Lord, which thought himselfe to be glasse, and had not his imagination troubled, otherwise then in this one onely thing, for he could speake mervailouslie well of any other thing: he used commonly to sit, and tooke great delight that his friends should come and see him, but so as that he would desire them, that they would not come neere unto him.”⁴¹ The extra detail in More’s account, such as the man’s social standing and, excepting his delusion, his mental competence, can therefore be traced back to du Laurens. This suggests that whilst More used *The Anatomy of Melancholy* as a guide, in this instance he must also have checked the original source.

3.6.2 References

More’s accuracy in summarising the content of the cases from his sources was almost perfect, suggesting either that he had excellent notes or that he literally had the source at hand whilst writing the manuscript. In contrast, there were more frequent and basic errors in the margin note references, mostly added to later editions. Some of the apparent discrepancies I found were actually due to different

³⁹ More, *ET*, pp.11-2.

⁴⁰ Robert Burton [‘Democritus Junior’], *The Anatomy of Melancholy what it is. With all the kindes, causes, symptomes, prognostickes, and severall cures of it. In three maine partitions with their severall sections, members, and subsections. Philosophically, medicinally, historically, opened and cut up*, (Oxford: John Lichfield and James Short, for Henry Cripps, 1621), I.iii.i.iii p. 248.

⁴¹ André du Laurens [Andreas Laurentius], *A Discourse of the Preservation of the sight: of Melancholike diseases; of Rheumes, and of Old Age*, translated by Richard Surphlet (London: Felix Kingston for Ralph Jacson, 1599), II.vii pp. 100, 102.

structures in different editions of some of the sources or the intervening source or translation that More actually used. We cannot know if the remaining errors were by More, his amanuensis, or a printing error.

In his modern edition of *The Immortality of the Soul*, Jacob has noted some of the reference errors in the 1662 edition, but otherwise made no comment.⁴² Jacob does not comment at all on two cases, which I have not yet been able to trace to the original source. One case referred in the text to ‘Marcus Damascenus’, who has proved to be untraceable.⁴³ The other case, More described as witnessed by “Sennertus” but his margin note reference reads “Sennert. *de viribus Imaginat. cap. 14.*”; that incorrectly links Sennert to *De viribus imaginationis* (1608) by Feyens but I cannot find the case in either source.⁴⁴ Jacob mistakenly states that one case More referenced to Vanini (without specific book or chapter references) did not exist in the source and linked it instead to other discussions by Vanini on spontaneous generation. However, Vanini had indeed reported the eyewitness account by his friend Johannes Ginochius—exactly as More described—of a raindrop turning into a frog in July.⁴⁵

Referencing errors were not unique to *The Immortality of the Soul*, since similar errors occurred in the later editions of other works. For example in the 1662 edition of *Conjectura Cabbalistica* the margin note reference concerning Pythagoras’s thigh appearing to be gold was “See *Iamblich. De vita Pythag. cap. 28*”, when it was actually described in chapter 19.⁴⁶ Similarly, in the 1656 edition of *Enthusiasmus*

⁴² For example More, *IS*, 2nd edition in *CPSW* (1662), margin note references p. 131 “See *Magica de Spectris*, published by Henningus Grossius, lib. I. sect. 140.” should be “sect. 104.”; p. 173 “Fienus *de virtus Imaginat. quaest. 15. exempl. 8.*” should be “*quaest. 13.*”; p. 205 (two cases) “Fromond. *de Anima, lib. I. cap. 4. artic. 13.*” should be “*artic. 3.*”. These errors have been noted by Jacob, *IS* (1987), ‘Notes’, ref. 173/5 p. 394; 227/36 p. 411; 270/16 pp. 425-6.

⁴³ More, *IS*, III.vi p. 391. I have been unable to trace Marcus Damascenus and it seems neither has anyone else: Jacob has no reference in his modern edition of *IS* (1987); and Tyson, in his ‘The Life of Agrippa’, describes Marcus Damascenus as an “unidentified author”.

⁴⁴ More, *IS*, III.vi p. 392. Probably from Sennert or Feyens, source not identified. Jacob only repeats More’s incorrect reference in his modern edition of *IS* (1987), ‘Notes’, ref. 224/20 p. 408.

⁴⁵ More, *IS*, II.xv p. 276. See Lucilio [‘Giulio Cesare’] Vanini [Julii Cæsaris Vaninus], *De Admirandis Nature Regine Deæque Mortalium Arcanis* (Paris: 1616), Dialogus XXX, p. 201. See also “Vanini does not refer to Johannes Ginochius in the section [Dial. X], and when he does relate an anecdote concerning the theologian (Dial. LV) it is with no connection to the mode of generation of frogs.” in Jacob, *IS* (1987), ‘Notes’, ref. 165/23 pp. 382-3.

⁴⁶ More, *CC*, ‘The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’, iii, pp. 186-7 [(1662+), ‘An Appendix to the Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’, i pp. 101-2]. From Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, ed.

Triumphatus one case had only the general reference “Baptista Porta”, referring to Italian polymath Giambattista della Porta [1535-1615]. In 1662, the margin note reference, “*Magiae natural. lib. 7. cap. 2.*” was added, but the case was actually in the second chapter of the eighth book.⁴⁷

Finally, there were five cases in *Grand Mystery of Godliness* regarding the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Jewish scholar, Titus Flavius Josephus [37-c.100CE] that appeared at first to have incorrect references. The editions of Josephus from the eighteenth century (for example, William Whiston, 1737) through to modern editions referenced these cases in the fifth chapter of the sixth book, whereas More’s margin note reference was “Joseph. *De bello Judaico, lib: 7. cap. 12.*”. I traced the discrepancy to Thomas Lodge’s translation of Josephus in 1602 (and subsequent editions) where the case was located exactly where More had referenced it. More and Lodge both described the comet as a star like a sword with almost identical phrases, whereas in contrast Whiston’s later version described the star and the comet as though they are separate phenomena.⁴⁸

3.7 Changes, Criticism and Credulity

3.7.1 Revisions

As explained in chapter two, More made amendments to some of his works in their later editions. Most often the changes were included as ‘Scholia’ at the end of the chapter or work, rather than altering the original text. Some works remained unchanged, such as *Grand Mystery of Godliness* that remained unaltered for the

Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Alpine, N.J.: Platonist Press, 1919), ‘Biography by Iamblichus’, xix p. 44, xxviii pp. 64-5; and from Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras*, ed. Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie (Alpine, N.J.: Platonist Press, 1919), ‘Biography of Porphyry’ pp. 137-8.

⁴⁷ More, *ET* (1656), p. 9 [(1662), p. 7]. From Giambattista della Porta [Jo. Baptistae Portae Neapolitani], *Magiae Naturalis Libri Viginti* (Hanover: 1619), VIII.ii p. 311, English edition, *Natural magick by John Baptista Porta, a Neapolitane; in twenty books* (London: Thomas Young and Samuel Speed, 1658), pp. 219-20.

⁴⁸ Compare: (1) “flaming sword that hung over the City for a whole year together”, More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 220; (2) “a comete in forme of a firie sword, which for a yeere together did hang ouer the citie” Flavius Josephus, *The famous and memorable workes of Josephus, a man of much honour and learning among the Jewes. Faithfully translated out of the Latin, and French, by Tho. Lodge Doctor in Physicke*, ([London]: G. Bishop, S. Waterson, P. Short, and Tho. Adams, 1602), VII.xii p. 738; (3) “a star resembling a sword, which stood over the city, and a comet, that continued a whole year”, Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews or History of the Destruction of Jerusalem*, translated by William Whiston (London: W. Bowyer, 1737), VI.v.

Latin editions of 1675 and 1679 despite the controversy it had generated after the Restoration. More's biographer Ward noted that "That what he did, must go usually as he first wrote it; and he could not well make Changes in it. *His First Draught*, he would say, *must stand*."⁴⁹

New cases were only added to the natural theological works, *An Antidote against Atheism*, *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*, *The Immortality of the Soul*, and *Saducismus Triumphatus*. All the new cases were early modern, apart from one concerning the siege of Constantinople in 1453. These amendments show More strove to keep his natural theological arguments relevant by adding contemporary case material. In the 1662 second edition of *The Immortality of the Soul*, More added a new case referring to the Devil of Mascon as an example of an aerial spirit.⁵⁰ In the 1679 third edition, he expanded on various points in his 'Scholia' including a further seven cases mostly concerning the actions of disembodied spirits. More bolstered the discussion on Matthew Coker's healing by touch and added the case of Valentine Greatrakes in the Scholia of the 1679 third edition of *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus*.⁵¹ He also added a further fourteen cases of demonic disturbances and bewitchment to the second edition of *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1682) in 'A Continuation of the Collection'.

An Antidote against Atheism was the work More revised the most, and the changes warrant a closer examination. In the first edition of 1653, there were 79 cases. Six cases were removed in 1655, but forty cases were added, another twelve were included in 1662 and a further two were added to the 1679 fourth edition. The consolidated total across all editions of the *Antidote* was therefore 133 cases. In the second edition in 1655, an appendix was added, together with three new chapters in the third book. The new chapter seven discussed the trial evidence of Anne Bodenham, convicted and hanged for witchcraft in Salisbury in 1653, as reported by Edmund Bower.⁵² The new chapters eight and nine reported the accounts by Martin

⁴⁹ Ward, *Life*, p. 153.

⁵⁰ More, *IS*, 2nd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.iv p. 162. From Francis Perreaud, *The Devil of Mascon*, translated by Peter Du Moulin (Oxford: Hen: Hall for Rich: Davis, 1658) [*Boyle Works*, I, pp. 13-39].

⁵¹ More, *ET*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), 'Scholia', lviii pp. 223-4 [(1712, pp. 51-3].

⁵² More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), III.vii p. 190-207. From Edmund ['Edmond'] Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived, or, Witchcraft condemn'd in Anne Bodenham* (London: T. W. for Richard Best, and John Place, 1653).

Weinrich of a shoemaker and a town alderman who, after their deaths, terrorised their respective townsfolk.⁵³

The appendix did not contain any new cases, but its last two chapters dealt with objections to the third book of the *Antidote*. More explained how, in response to objections, he had re-assessed the cases against his criteria and consequently he eliminated six cases. Of three cases cut from the fifth chapter, two cases (the first witnessed by Italian physician Antonio Benivieni [1443-1502] and the second by one Meinerus Clatsius), concerned alleged bewitchment (vomiting strange objects).⁵⁴ More conceded this “might be done by some sleight and cunning, onely to get money.” On the other hand, he judged that more reliable witnesses such as the renowned physicians, Cardano and Weyer, would not have been “deceived” and those cases were retained.⁵⁵ The third case excised was “that maid [...] in *Italy* telling what was the best verse in all *Virgill*” although she did not know Latin.⁵⁶ More confirmed that speaking another language could only be regarded as “supernatural” if it was certain that the person had not been coached and he could not be sure in this case.⁵⁷ The final three excised cases were recounted directly to More and Cudworth in 1646 by a young woman as evidence against the subsequently convicted witch “Lendall-wife” at Cambridge, who had arranged a strange magical dinner and for the woman to marry a man in black (i.e. the Devil),⁵⁸ but More now judged they lacked corroborating witnesses and tangible effects. With these changes, More hoped to have resolved any perceived “difficulties concerning all the Historicall passages”. He explained “I have expunged some, that seemed not so accurately agreeable with those laws I set my self upon my closer view. Not that I know any thing of them whereby I can discover them to be false, but because

⁵³ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.viii p. 209-14 & III.ix p. 215-27. From Weinrich, ‘Proaemium’, pp. 1-13 & pp. 13-46.

⁵⁴ More, AA, (1653 only), III.v p. 120. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), IV.vi pp. 297, 298-9 [(1583), pp. 408, 409-10; (1660), pp. 292, 293].

⁵⁵ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), ‘Appendix’, xii p. 379.

⁵⁶ More, AA (1653 only), III.v p. 122. Probably from Jean Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers*, (Antwerp: 1593), III.vi p. 294 (this case was not in the 1580 or 1587 editions or the 2001 modern translation). Also in Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), V.xxxix p. 470 [(1583), p. 644; (1660), pp. 453-4].

⁵⁷ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), ‘Appendix’, xii p. 380.

⁵⁸ More, AA (1653 only), III.vii pp. 128-30.

wanting that conformity, they must be acknowledged by me not so convincingly true.”⁵⁹

In the third edition of 1662, he added twelve new cases including details of effects he attributed to the Spirit of Nature,⁶⁰ an apparition, and ten cases of demonic disturbances, including the ‘Devil of Mascon’.⁶¹ In the fourth edition of 1679 he added the details of an injury at a distance caused by a sympathetic connection and a summary of Glanvill’s account of the “*Dæmon of Tedworth*” in the Scholia.⁶²

In the second edition of *Saducismus Triumphatus* (1682), More added ‘A Continuation of the Collection’ with additional advertisements and ‘An Account of what happen’d to a Boy at *Malmoe* in *Schonen* in the year 1678’ and also explained that he corrected three instances of false, mistaken or disputed information. The first concerned the case of Anne Walker’s ghost, where More’s original source, John Webster, had cautioned his readers that he had lost his notes but was confident in his recall of the story.⁶³ In the first edition of *Saducismus Triumphatus*, More reported Webster’s account verbatim in ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter with the Postscript, To Mr. J. G.’, but he also explained how he had investigated the case further via his own network enabling him to clarify and correct some details. Despite minor discrepancies in the narratives, More was satisfied: “there is no doubt to be made of the truth of the Apparition. [...] This Story of *Anne Walker* I think you will do well to put amongst your Additions in the new Impression of your *Daemon of Tedworth*, it being so excellently well attested, and so unexceptionably in every respect”.⁶⁴ In the second edition of *Saducismus Triumphatus*, on the other hand, More explained that the additional appearance of an apparition at the Walker trial might have been falsely reported. The error was detected by More’s “worthy Friend Doctor *J. Davis* by being

⁵⁹ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), ‘Appendix’, xii p. 383.

⁶⁰ More, AA, 3rd edition in CSPW (1662), II.ii p. 46.

⁶¹ More, AA, 3rd edition in CSPW (1662), III.iii pp. 93-4. From Perreaud, *Mascon* [Boyle Works, I, pp. 13-39].

⁶² “de *Daemone Tedworthiensi*” in More, AA in OO, ‘Scholia’, III.iii pp. 100-1 [AA in CSPW (1712), pp. 162-3].

⁶³ Webster, *Displaying*, xvi p. 298.

⁶⁴ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, p. 11.

lately in the North, and speaking with the Parties, had discovered to me this Mistake, I was impatient till I rectified it in this Edition.”⁶⁵

More was also upfront about correcting two other errors in the second edition. One concerned Relation XXIV, which had assumed Mr. Andrew Paschal of Soper-Lane in London was the witness, whereas he was just the correspondent, and the actual witness was Mr. J. Newberrie of Maidenhead in Berkshire.⁶⁶ The second concerned Relation IX, one of Glanvill’s cases, where “it had been since discovered that some Waggish Fellow that was like *Edward Avon* in Feature, had imposed upon *Goddard*, and made him believe he was his Father in Laws Ghost.”⁶⁷ In correcting these three inaccuracies, More claimed that he “would conceal nothing”.⁶⁸ However, the main text of *Saducismus Triumphatus* remained uncorrected concerning the case of Anne Walker, and Relations IX and XXIV in the second edition of 1682. The third edition of 1689 was adjusted by the insertion of two asterisks into the title of Relation XXIV by Paschal’s name and the location of Soper-Lane informing the reader to refer to the correction in the ‘Account’: “* Vi. *The Account of the 2^d Edition*, p. 12.”⁶⁹ For some unknown reason, the publishers excluded both the ‘Account’ and the note in Relation XXIV from both the 1700 ‘reprint’ and the fourth edition of 1726,⁷⁰ but this was clearly contrary to More’s intention to be accurate and honest, “that faithfulness I hold myself obliged to in matters of this nature”.⁷¹

3.7.2 Criticism

More lived in a period when belief in miraculous and supernatural phenomena was the mainstream position, but there was a fashionable undercurrent of scepticism. Much of this scepticism seems to have been in unrecorded oral culture, but it is best epitomised in print by *The Question of Witchcraft Debated* (1669) by John Wagstaffe

⁶⁵ Henry More, ‘An Account of this Second Edition’, in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition, (1682), sig. A5-A6.

⁶⁶ More, ‘An Account’, in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition, (1682), sig. A6-A6v.

⁶⁷ More, ‘An Account’, in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition, (1682), sig. A7.

⁶⁸ More, ‘An Account’, in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition, (1682), sig. A7.

⁶⁹ ‘Relation XXIV’ in Glanvill, *ST*, 3rd edition, ed. Henry More (London: S. Lownds, 1689), II p. 444.

⁷⁰ ‘Relation XXIV’ in Glanvill, *ST*, 3rd edition (reprint) (London: A. L., 1700), II p. 149 and in in Glanvill, *ST*, 4th edition (London: A. Bettesworth, and J. Batley; W. Mears, and J. Hooke, 1726), II p. 374.

⁷¹ More, ‘An Account’, in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition, (1682), sig. A7.

[1633-1677].⁷² The only author to challenge More directly in print regarding his belief in miraculous and supernatural phenomena was John Webster in *The Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft* (1677). Webster referenced More several times in his refutation of immaterial beings, allowing corporeality to demons, and arguing that the Devil “operateth nothing at all in [witches], except a mental and internal delusion”.⁷³ Crocker discusses the theoretical arguments that Webster put forward against Glanvill and More, particularly the rejection of immaterial substance and diabolic witchcraft.⁷⁴ However, Crocker does not mention that Webster also criticised More’s choice of sources for his miraculous and supernatural phenomena, especially those taken from Weinrich, Bodin and Remy. Webster remarked that it was with “much wonder” that More “should make such bad choice of the Authors from whom he takes his stories, or that he should pitch upon those that seem so fabulous, impossible and incredible.” Furthermore, Webster questioned of More “whether he can rationally believe those things either to have been true or possible”, and stated that he gave little credit to any of More’s stories.⁷⁵ In general, Webster’s position was that if the effects could be explained naturally, there was no need to “fetch a Devil from Hell” to account for the phenomenon.⁷⁶

As discussed earlier, More responded robustly to criticism and in 1679 he counter-attacked Webster with personal insults, lambasting the “supercilious ignorance and stupidity of this Quack-Theologist”. More challenged Webster’s “impossible” arguments including the “absurd fiction” of an astral spirit with corporeal sense and memory, and decried natural magic as “fooleries [...] disagreeable to all reason”. More clarified his interpretation of the Silesian cases, and restated that they were “matters of fact seen by numbers of People, and related by an eminent and grave Physician”. He also defended the credibility of the testimony of “two such learned

⁷² John Wagstaffe, *The Question of Witchcraft Debated: Or a discourse against their Opinion that affirm Witches*, (London: Edward Millington, 1669), 2nd edition (1671). For a fuller discussion, see Michael Hunter, ‘The Witchcraft Controversy and the Nature of Free-Thought in Restoration England: John Wagstaffe’s *The Question of Witchcraft Debated* (1669)’ in Hunter, *Science and the Shape of Orthodoxy*, xiv pp. 286-307.

⁷³ Webster, *Displaying*, xi p. 233, i p. 18.

⁷⁴ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 133-40.

⁷⁵ Webster, *Displaying*, xvi p. 292.

⁷⁶ Webster, *Displaying*, vi p. 126.

and experienced men”, Bodin and Remy, and reaffirmed how his case selection represented “solid, useful, and experimented Truths”.⁷⁷

3.7.3 Scepticism and Credulity

Coudert describes More as an “expedient” sceptic who was quite capable of logical objective reasoning, but “only displays scepticism and suspension of judgement when it comes to the opinions of others.”⁷⁸ MacKinnon’s view was even more incisive—that More judged the validity of new ideas and information by their utility to his prime objective of “upholding the assurance of spiritual reality.”⁷⁹

An example of More’s scepticism is evident in *A Modest Enquiry into the Mystery of Iniquity* (1664) in which he listed a number of frauds, forgeries and fictions he claimed the Catholic Church promoted for “their own profit” that contravened his first criterion of self-interest. These included the “*lying Miracles*” supposedly performed by saints, and the fake apparitions cynically designed to retain and attract belief in the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory.⁸⁰ These “*Legendary Lies and false Miracles*” will be explored in more depth in chapter four.⁸¹ However, he considered the report of three or five lights dancing on a hill at night in Ireland to be genuine because he considered the source credible (“a Surgeon and Physician in *Ireland*, both a good and prudent Person, and that also was an Eye-witness”). Furthermore, he thought it must have been “the sport of some *Genii*, and of no idle or wanton Men” because “the Motion of the Dancers was so swift, that no man can imitate it.” and the flames retained “an upright Pyramidal Form” rather than being drawn backward by the motion. More was undeterred with the discovery of “thin Tallow droppings” on the hill that flamed when thrown in a fire. More concluded that this was “not all strange or incongruous” because the *Genii* would take the form of “oily and fattish Liquors, for the more easily representing a Light or Flame”.⁸²

⁷⁷ More, *AA*, 4th edition in *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, III.ix pp. 121-2 [(1712), pp. 167-70].

⁷⁸ Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 125, 129.

⁷⁹ MacKinnon, ‘Introduction’, *Philosophical Writings*, p. xxi.

⁸⁰ More, *ME-MI*, II.viii pp. 133-4.

⁸¹ More, *ME-SP*, II.xxii p. 471. See chapter four, pp. 152-7 in this thesis.

⁸² More, *IS*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), III.viii, ‘Scholia’, p. 420 [(1712), pp. 196-7].

As well as Catholicism, More was scathing of the claims for astrology, describing astrological principles as “groundless, frivolous, nay contradictory one with another, and built upon false Hypotheses and gross mistakes concerning the Nature and System of the World”.⁸³ Although More indulged in a lengthy critique from a basis of astronomical knowledge and reason, his proof that astrology could not work depended on case studies of the divergent lives of twins. Twins “whose *natures* should be utterly the same according to their Art; and if they could be born *at one moment*, the *moment of their death* should be the same also.”⁸⁴ Similarly, anyone who believed in the natural magic of talismans was “more irrationally credulous than the most simple *Superstitionist* in the world.” At the same time, he proposed that any apparent effects were likely to be from “some ludicrous and deceitfull *Daemons* that love to befool Mankind.”⁸⁵ Astrology and talismans will be explored in more depth in chapter seven.

More’s behaviour is a classic symptom of confirmation bias. Modern psychological studies show that people favour and are less critical of evidence that is congruent with their pre-existing beliefs, and are more likely to interpret ambiguous data in a way that is consistent with those beliefs, and vice versa.⁸⁶ For example, people who believe in astrology are more likely to rate fictional horoscopes as being accurate than disbelievers.⁸⁷ Similarly, believers in spiritualism are more likely to judge that a staged séance was genuinely supernatural and also be less accurate in their observation and memory of the events.⁸⁸

As Coudert notes, More and Glanvill were attempting a ‘scientific’ demonology,⁸⁹ collecting observations of miraculous and supernatural phenomena and proposing explanatory theories. If we step back for a moment and evaluate More’s method in more detail, we see the signs of what would now be called ‘pseudoscience’: the

⁸³ More, *GMG*, VII.xvii p. 359.

⁸⁴ More, *GMG*, VII.xvii p. 357.

⁸⁵ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv pp. 432-3.

⁸⁶ French & Stone, *Anomalistic Psychology*, pp. 130-4, 274.

⁸⁷ Richard Wiseman and Matthew D. Smith, ‘Assessing the role of cognitive and motivational biases in belief in the paranormal’, *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 66 (2002), 157-66.

⁸⁸ Richard Wiseman, Matthew D. Smith, and J. Wiseman, ‘Eyewitness testimony and the paranormal’, *Skeptical Inquirer*, 19:6 (1995), 29-32.

⁸⁹ Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 132-3.

emphasis on confirmation rather than refutation; excessive reliance on anecdotal and testimonial evidence; irrefutable hypotheses; an unchanging body of belief (sometimes despite numerous examples of frauds); uncritically accepting phenomena without rigorously examining or testing the evidence; use of myths and legends; offering solutions to otherwise unexplained mysteries; and, holding a worldview that admits elusive, untestable immaterial entities rather than changes to material and scientifically measurable things.⁹⁰

However, More was a man of his age and his approach was actually pioneering, albeit to a branch that remains on the fringe of science. More was conscious that his critics might charge him with credulity; therefore his use of selection criteria was a sincere attempt to set aside the less robust cases and provide only the more credible accounts of miraculous and supernatural effects in order to persuade others of the existence of spirits and the logic of his metaphysical arguments.

⁹⁰ Hines, *Pseudoscience*, pp. 1-20; French & Stone, *Anomalistic Psychology*, pp. 252-3.

4 Miracles, Providence and Prophecy

4.1 Introduction

Phenomena attributed directly to God (miracles, prophecy and providence) were the largest group of miraculous and supernatural effects in More's works. Clark explains how early modern demonology maintained a clear intellectual distinction between God's miracles ('*miracula*') and Satan's wonders ('*mira*'). Divine miracles were supernatural (above nature) and required the agency of God and were thus impossible for men or demons to perform. Non-divine, yet extraordinary or wondrous, phenomena were preternatural (beside nature) and thus limited by the powers within nature. These natural powers might be hidden (occult), or accelerated or intensified by demons with the result that, although only different in degree from ordinary nature itself, the effects might appear miraculous to people.¹ This distinction was largely derived from Thomas Aquinas, who defined miracles as "something done by God". Aquinas ranked miracles from the first rank, powers above nature such as making the sun stand still or parting water; to the second rank, natural processes made to occur in an unnatural order such as sight after blindness or life after death; to finally the third rank, within the power and order of nature but enacted or expedited by God, such as curing a disease or changing the weather.²

Whilst Catholics believed miracles continued to occur, most often channelled through saints, Protestants believed the age of miracles ended with the Apostles. Like many of his contemporaries, More considered that "supernatural Miracles [...had...] ceased", yet accounts of 'miracles' and the 'miraculous' abounded in both weighty books (like More's) and the popular pamphlet literature.³ Anglican apologists, including More, took on the challenge of investigating and interpreting them whilst walking the middle path between atheism on the one side and radical

¹ Clark, *Thinking*, p. 153.

² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles* (1260-65), translated Joseph Rickaby, (London: Burns and Oates, 1905), III.ci "Of Miracles".

³ Jane Shaw, *Miracles in Enlightenment England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 2-5; More, *GMG*, 'To the Reader', p. xx. Derived from *AKJV*, 1 Corinthians 13:8-13.

enthusiasm and Catholicism on the other.⁴ Many early modern Protestants believed God continued to actively govern the world and take an interest in the lives of men through divine providence, which ideologically eliminated the concept of chance and coincidence.⁵ For example, unusual natural phenomena such as meteors were interpreted as meaningful omens, with concurrent or subsequent circumstances retrospectively connected by a perceived judgement of reward, punishment or warning. This was due in part to the personal nature of Protestant faith, but also to the current of millenarianism and the sense that the End of Days was near that intensified through the civil war and interregnum and persisted throughout the rest of the century.⁶

More sensed the Day of Judgement was nearing and, along with other contemporary intellectuals such as Newton, attempted to make sense of the obscure prophecies of Daniel and Revelation and to match their interpretations of the apocalyptic timeline to historical events.⁷ More also investigated other biblical prophecies supposedly fulfilled during the biblical era, especially those predicting the Messiah. More only credited the biblical prophets as genuinely inspired by God and regarded contemporary self-proclaimed prophets as deluded enthusiasts.⁸

In this chapter, I shall examine More's examples of the direct power of God: miracles, prophecy and providence. More's accounts of prophecy and miracles were almost exclusively biblical in origin and thus widely accepted, whereas his examples of providence spanned history and were more subjective in interpretation. More never questioned the veracity of the detail or the divine agency of the miraculous phenomena described in the Bible. I shall also discuss More's thoughts on the miracle claims of other religious sects and how he attempted to justify the distinction between 'true' and 'false' miracles.

⁴ Shaw, *Miracles*, pp. 4-20.

⁵ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 91-2.

⁶ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 167-71.

⁷ More, *DD-45*, IV.xxxvi p. 195; Hutton, 'Apocalypse', p. 137. See chapter two, p. 87 in this thesis. Richard S. Westfall, *Science and Religion in the Seventeenth-Century* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press: 1958, 1973), p. 215-6; Popkin, 'Spiritualistic Cosmologies', p. 109-12.

⁸ More, *ET*, p. 2.

4.2 Old Testament Miracles

In More's opinion, miracles were among the clearest demonstrations of the existence of God.⁹ More did not explicitly define what a miracle was; rather he did this implicitly through his choice of cases. I have examined the prophecies separately and the remaining Old Testament miracles that More referenced demonstrated the awesome power of God's direct action in his benevolence and protection for his followers, and in torment, death and destruction for his enemies. More's purpose was not to create a comprehensive catalogue of Old Testament biblical miracles—among those he did not reference were Aaron's rod budding, blossoming and yielding almonds, the river Jordan dividing to let Joshua and the Israelites pass, and parted again for Elijah and Elisha, Samson's super-human strength and the fall of the walls of Jericho.¹⁰

The most significant of the Old Testament miracles were those of the Creation. More believed in the literal Creation as described in Genesis, which included the creation of matter (corporeal and ethereal), the world (its geography and natural processes), all living things (plants and animals), and the intellectual souls of men (and angels). The importance of the Creation miracles is evident in More's design of *Conjectura Cabbalistica* (1653), which set out his literal, philosophical and moral interpretations of the first three chapters of Genesis and established the "Wisdom, Power, and Goodness" of God that merited obedience and worship.¹¹

More reasoned that the words, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth", meant the Creation of corporeal matter but also all ethereal spirits. More explained the deeper meaning, "By *Heaven* or *Light*, you are to understand *The whole comprehension of intellectual Spirits*, souls of men and beasts, and the seminal forms of all things which you may call, if you please, *The world of Life*."¹² There are several important elements within that statement so I will unpack them one by one. The first is that by "*intellectual Spirits*" More meant the rational souls of both angels

⁹ More, *DD-123*, I.xiii pp. 50-1.

¹⁰ *AKJV*, Numbers 17:1-11; Joshua 3:14-7; 2 Kings 2:7-14; Judges 14:6, 15:14-5, 16:28-30; Joshua 6:6-20.

¹¹ More, *CC*, 'The Introduction to the Defence', p. 98.

¹² More, *CC*, 'The Philosophick Cabbala', i, p. 23. From *AKJV*, Genesis 1:1.

and men, capable of independent thought and reason. The second is that by “*The whole comprehension of*” More meant that God created at this time all the souls of all the people that would ever live. This was More’s argument for the pre-existence of the soul, which I will explore further in chapter five.¹³ Thirdly, like his fellow vitalist Cambridge Platonists, More believed in both the “souls of men and beasts”, whereas some contemporaries, most famously Descartes but also English natural philosopher Sir Kenelm Digby [1603-1665], considered animals to be soulless beast-machines.¹⁴ Finally, More referred to platonic “seminal forms”, which were the stimuli and templates for life and development imbued in vegetative matter by God.¹⁵ These forms powered and guided the generative process of all living things, “*The world of Life*”, overseen by the Soul of the World, or Spirit of Nature, which will be examined in chapter seven. More also used the fine detail in Genesis to highlight how God’s omnipotence was superior to and not bound by his own natural laws. For example, God created plants that flourished before any rain and without husbandry.¹⁶ More celebrated God’s awesome creative power in his ‘Divine Hymns’; “Who out of nothing all did bring, / And by his Word the World did raise.”¹⁷

After the Creation of the World, More’s other great biblical focus was the Destruction of the World. The Old Testament miracles of death, torment and destruction served as excellent precedents for the catastrophic events predicted in the apocalyptic dream of John in Revelation, such as the sounding of the Seven Trumpets and the plagues of the Seven Vials. Echoing the Apostle Peter, More warned sceptics and atheists that it was a mistake to argue God would not employ such extraordinary and destructive phenomena of divine retribution, because the Old Testament miracles of floods, thunder and fire proved God had done so before. For example, “Were the Waters in *Noah’s* time *natural*, when God had a controversie with all flesh, and shall the *Fire* that the world shall be destroyed with be

¹³ More, *IS*, II.xii pp. 240-1. See chapter five, pp. 163-5 in this thesis.

¹⁴ Cohen, ‘Descartes’, pp. 48-61; see also Peter Harrison, ‘Animal Souls, Metempsychosis, and Theodicy in Seventeenth-Century English Thought’, *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 31:4 (1993), 519-544, pp. 520-1, n. 10. See chapter five, pp. 160-1 in this thesis for discussion on More’s distinctions between different types of soul.

¹⁵ Reid, *Metaphysics*, pp. 317-8.

¹⁶ More, *CC*, ‘The Philosophick Cabbala’, ii p. 36.

¹⁷ More, *DD-123*, I.xviii p. 74; More, *DH*, ‘An Hymn Upon the Creation of the World’, pp. 507-9, 507.

spiritual?”¹⁸ In his “*Alphabet of Prophetick Iconisms*” in *Synopsis Prophetica* (1664) More explained that God had deployed divine ‘Thunder’ to “discomfit [...] the enemies of his Church”, for instance against the Philistines and the enemies of David.¹⁹ Similarly, the prophesied ‘Fire from Heaven’ had precedents with Elijah [“Elias”] “bringing down *fire from Heaven*” upon the soldiers sent to apprehend him and the destruction of Sodom “burnt by fire from Heaven”. Fire represented “*commination*” and “*Excommunication*” and thus was both a physical and spiritual punishment. Quoting Artemidorus Daldianus, the second-century diviner from Ephesus best known for his dream interpretations, More explained “*Thunder and Lightning does not unite, but disjoyns things that are united. So does Excommunication that rives off a Member from the Church.*”²⁰ Thus the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah with “fire from Heaven” was “a compendious representation of the final burning of the World.”²¹

As a warning to the ungodly, many interpreters of apocalyptic prophecy, including More, Mede and Grotius, highlighted the parallels between the Old Testament plagues of Egypt and the predicted plagues of the Apocalypse. When Pharaoh refused to release the Israelites from bondage, God plagued the Egyptians by turning the river water into blood, inflicting swarms of frogs, lice, and flies, the death of livestock, an outbreak of boils and sores, destructive hailstorms, a swarm of locusts, a three-day long darkness and the deaths of the firstborn.²² In Revelation, John prophesied that after the sounding of each of the seven trumpets, the seven “vials of the wrath of God” would be opened and pour plagues upon the earth.²³ However, More and the other interpreters usually distinguished the plagues of the “literal *Aegypt*”, that they believed occurred exactly as described in Exodus, from the plagues of the “Mystical or Spiritual *Aegypt*” (i.e. the apocalyptic prophecies), which

¹⁸ More, *GMG*, VI.i p. 214. From *AKJV*, 2 Peter 3; Genesis 6-7.

¹⁹ More, *ME-SP*, I.ix pp. 254-5. From *AKJV*, 1 Samuel 7:10; Psalm 18:13-4.

²⁰ More, *ME-SP*, I.vi pp. 237-8. From *AKJV*, Revelation 20:9; 2 Kings 1:10-2; Genesis 19:24. Also from Artemidorus Daldianus, *The interpretation of dreams digested into five books by that ancient and excellent philosopher, Artimedorus* [*Ονειροκριτικόν* or ‘*Oneirocritica*’], translated by R. W. [Robert Wood], 4th edition (London: Bernard Alsop, 1644), II.ix ‘Of the Ayre, and that which is there done’, pp. 66-9. [More references “*lib. 2. c. 8.*” and his wording is slightly different so he must have used a different version.]

²¹ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 220. From *AKJV*, Genesis 19:24 & Revelation 20:9.

²² *AKJV*, Exodus 7-12.

²³ More, *GMG*, V.xvi p. 187; More, *AARJ*, xi pp. 104-5 & xvi pp. 154-5. From *AKJV*, Revelation 8-11; Revelation 16.

they considered to be metaphorical.²⁴ Indeed, if one compares the account of the plague of locusts in Exodus with that in Revelation, the latter is so bizarre that metaphor seems the only credible explanation. Thus More and Mede interpreted the plague of locusts as a reference to Muhammad and the rise of the Saracens.²⁵ By 1664, More considered the Earth was already subject to the third of these final plagues—the third vial of the seventh trumpet, in which the rivers and fountains of water were turned to blood—and clearly this was not in any literal sense.²⁶

Further miraculous apocalyptic precedents included the parting of the Red Sea as Moses and the Israelites fled from Egypt. This was likened to the apocalyptic ‘sea of glass’, which More explained, “the Red Sea became as *Ice*, for its fixedness and transparency [...] a Sea of Glass mingled with Fire” as it reflected either the colour of the red sand or “the fiery appearance of the Angel that shined into it”.²⁷ Another case was God directing thunder and lightning at Lot’s wife, thus transmuting her into a pillar of salt as “a monument of God’s wrath upon disobedient curiosities”. This was More’s rationale for judging some more recent cases of transformations caused by ‘thunderstrike’ as examples of providence.²⁸ Also, God miraculously made the sun and moon stand still to provide extra hours of daylight, thus enabling Joshua and the Israelites to slaughter their enemies, the Amorites.²⁹ These three are examples of Aquinas’s first order miracles showing God’s total dominance over nature—God’s divine will was unconstrained by his own laws and could effect the ‘impossible’. The other ‘miracles’, such as the plagues of Egypt, were ‘possible’ within the laws of nature as extreme forms of otherwise natural phenomena, e.g. hailstorms, plagues of natural pests, and rain for forty days and nights; or possibly explainable through natural means, such as a volcanic eruption causing toxic ash resulting in boils and sores and the darkening of the sky for three days. These third rank (in Aquinas’s

²⁴ More, *GMG*, V.xvi p. 187; More, *AARJ*, xvi p. 160.

²⁵ Compare *AKJV*, Exodus 10:12-15 (the Egyptian Plague of Locusts) with Revelation 9:3-10 (the Fifth Trumpet). More, *GMG*, V.xvi pp. 187-8. See also Mede, *Clavis Apocalyptica*, I, pp. 89-116 [(1643), I, pp. 99-120].

²⁶ More, *ME-SP*, ‘The Preface to the Reader’, p. 204. From *AKJV*, Revelation 16:4.

²⁷ More, *DD-45*, IV.vxxii p. 105. From *AKJV*, Exodus 14:21-2 & 15:8; Revelation 4:6 & 15:2.

²⁸ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 235. From *AKJV*, Genesis 19:26. See chapter four, pp. 145-6 in this thesis.

²⁹ More, *DD-123*, I.xix p. 79. From *AKJV*, Joshua 10:12-4.

classification) miracles were still judged as miracles because the agency of causation was divine, unlike the weather magic where the Devil was the agency of causation.³⁰

Sometimes God rewarded his followers through his miracles. God aided the Israelites by bringing an army of slain men back to life from dry bones.³¹ An angel appeared in a burning bush to advise Moses that God would rescue the Israelites from bondage.³² God enabled Abraham and Sarah to conceive their son, Isaac, despite their great ages (about a hundred and ninety years old respectively). More considered this, and the virgin birth of Jesus, to be metaphors for new pure beginnings “conceived by Faith in the omnipotent Spirit of God”.³³ The holy prophets, Elisha and Elijah, even resurrected the dead by appealing to God. More actually muddled the two when describing the case of the “Widow's Child”. It was Elijah that prayed and laid his body on top of the widow's child, whereas in Elisha's resurrection miracle, the father of the child was still alive and the prophet prayed but did not touch the child.³⁴ More thus believed miraculous healing by touch was possible, and his thoughts on two contemporary ‘stokers’ will be examined in chapter seven.³⁵

As well as restorative miracles, God sometimes intervened to protect his faithful followers, for example the prophet Daniel miraculously survived imprisonment in a lions' den.³⁶ Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were protected from certain death after Nebuchadnezzar locked them in a “fierce Furnace” for refusing to abandon their faith in God and worship a golden idol.³⁷ Moses's Brazen Serpent was imbued with healing powers by God to protect the Israelites from the deadly bites of the fiery serpents, although it should be noted that God sent the serpents in the first place to

³⁰ See chapter six, pp. 216-7.

³¹ More, *DD-45*, IV.vxxii p. 105. From *AKJV*, Ezekiel 37:1-14.

³² More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, p. 38. From *AKJV*, Exodus 3:2.

³³ More, *DD-45*, V.xxi pp. 421. From *AKJV*, Romans 4:18-22; Genesis 17:15-9, 18:10-5, 21:1-3; John 1:14; Matthew 1:18-25; & Luke 1:26-38.

³⁴ More, *EPD*, III.xviii p. 78. From *AKJV*, 1 Kings 17:17-24 (Elijah) - compare with 2 Kings 18-37 (Elisha).

³⁵ See chapter seven, pp. 242-4.

³⁶ More, *EPD*, VI.ii p. 226. From *AKJV*, Daniel 6:16-23.

³⁷ More, *DD-123*, I.xix p. 79. From *AKJV*, Daniel 3:23-7.

punish those that complained and lost faith during the wandering in the wilderness.³⁸ More also analogised Jesus's three-day entombment with the three days Jonah spent miraculously alive inside the 'whale'. Again, God sent both the tempest that threatened Jonah's boat and the whale [great fish] that swallowed him as a punishment.³⁹

4.3 New Testament Miracles

More acknowledged the importance of miracles to the success of Christianity, especially the "wonderfull works" of Jesus and the Apostles.⁴⁰ More considered Jesus's miracles as proof that he was the son of God and that the Bible was a factual historical record by corroborating reports from impartial [albeit later] "Heathen Writers", such Roman Emperor Julian 'the Apostate' [c.331-363CE], Greek philosopher Celsus [second century CE], Sossianus Hierocles, a Roman aristocrat and official [c.300CE], and references to the actions of Roman Emperor Tiberius [42BCE - 37CE] and the Jews, although they regarded Jesus as a magician. More noted that even "our modern Atheists", the Italian philosophers Vanini and Pietro Pomponazzi [1462-1525], acknowledged Jesus, although they attributed his power "to the influence of the Stars and celestial Intelligences".⁴¹ In More's works, Jesus was almost always associated with the miracles of his birth, life and resurrection, and rarely his moral teachings or parables.

More set himself the difficult challenge of convincing the "Heathen" that the "extraordinary and *miraculous*" actions of Jesus were genuinely divine by distinguishing them from similar non-miraculous wonders, such as the "miraculous exploits" of Apollonius of Tyana, whilst at the same time convincing the "whiffling Atheists" that both had a supernatural origin.⁴² Such comparisons had been drawn since at least the fourth century when *Contra Hieroclem*, traditionally attributed to the fourth-century Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea [c.260-339], scrutinised and

³⁸ More, *ME-SP*, I.iv p. 222; More, *GMG*, III.iv pp. 66-7 & VIII.x pp. 430, 433-4. From *AKJV*, Numbers 21:8-9.

³⁹ More, *GMG*, V.i p. 137. From *AKJV*, Matthew 12:39-40 & Jonah 1 & 2.

⁴⁰ More, *GMG*, V.xi pp. 163-4.

⁴¹ More, *GMG*, VIII.xii p. 411 & VII.x p. 320.

⁴² More, *GMG*, IV.ii p. 102, IV.ix p. 120 & 122, IV.v p. 109.

criticised the claims of Philostratus and the arguments of Hierocles, who had judged both men to be “sacred”.⁴³ Having already cited Apollonius’s wonders as evidence for the reality of spirits in his earlier natural theological works,⁴⁴ More could not simply discredit Apollonius or Philostratus without contradicting himself.

More compared the miracle stories associated with both men across five categories, notably weighted in Jesus’s favour illustrating More’s confirmation bias in action. The categories were: “*His miraculous feeding of the People; His curing diseases; His casting out Devils; His raising of the dead, and His predictions of things to come.*”⁴⁵ For the ‘*miraculous feeding of the People*’, More emphasized how the vast scale and tangible effects of the two occasions when Jesus fed thousands of people with just a few loaves and fishes went far beyond any illusion or “*natural power of Imagination*”.⁴⁶ In contrast, More found just one food-related case from Apollonius’s visit to India, when tables, plates and food were carried through the air without human assistance. More likened this to the “junketings of Witches”, the notoriously insubstantial or illusory feasts at the witches’ nocturnal Sabbaths that left “the partakers of them as weak and faint almost as if they had eaten nothing”.⁴⁷

More commented on the abundant cases of Jesus “*curing diseases*” and in some instances Jesus had asked the beneficiaries to keep it secret.⁴⁸ After Jesus’s death, his Apostles were endowed with the power of healing through prayer, touch and even “by the mere shadow of their bodies, which seems more wonderfull then by the touching of the hem of Christ’s garment.”⁴⁹ In comparison, More cited three of Apollonius’s cures: curing a man of dropsy; curing a man of behaving like a dog after being bitten by one; and freeing Ephesus from the plague. However, More argued the Devil had caused the “devouring pestilence” in order that Apollonius

⁴³ More, *GMG*, ‘To the Reader’, pp. x-xi; Eusebius of Caesarea, *Contra Hieroclem* (c. 300) [*The Treatise of Eusebius*], translated by F. C. Conybeare in *Philostratus: The life of Apollonius of Tyana, the Epistles of Apollonius and the Treatise of Eusebius* (London: Heinemann, 1912) 2 vols., Vol. II, 483-605.

⁴⁴ For example More, *PP (PS)*, p. 258; *AA*, III.ix p. 138 [(1655+), III.xii]; *IS*, III.v p. 385.

⁴⁵ More, *GMG*, IV.ix p. 120.

⁴⁶ More, *GMG*, IV.v p. 109-10. From *AKJV*, Matthew 14:15-21, Mark 6:38-44; Luke 9:13-19; John 6:9-13; Matthew 15:32-8; Mark 8:1-9.

⁴⁷ More, *GMG*, IV.v p. 109-10; IV.ix pp. 120-1. From Flavius Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius*, translated by Conybeare in *Philostratus*, III.xxvii.

⁴⁸ More, *GMG*, IV.v p. 109. From *AKJV*, e.g. Luke 4:39 (Matthew, Luke, Mark, John *passim*).

⁴⁹ More, *GMG*, V.xi, p. 163. From *AKJV*, Acts 5:15-6; Matthew 9:20-2.

could get the glory of relieving the city, without commenting on the similarity of the supernatural effects to those of the Brazen Serpent.⁵⁰

More noted the numerous cases of Jesus and the Apostles ‘*casting out Devils*’, highlighting in particular the case of Legion. Jesus commanded a “numerous rabble” of demons to cease possession of a man, and the demons possessed a herd of two-thousand pigs rather than be sent “out into the deep” (presumably banishment back to Hell). The herd subsequently charged into the water and “choked”.⁵¹ This case illustrates some characteristics that More attributed to demonic spirits: they took an immaterial form; many spirits could occupy the same physical space; they could possess and torment people or animals; and they were compelled to follow a direct commandment of God or Jesus. In comparison, More found only the exorcism of the “laughing *Daemoniack*” by Apollonius, and two cases of exposing or driving away demons, including exposing the bride of Menippus as a “*Lamia* [...] a foul carnivorous *Fiend*”. However, More judged these acts to be “either *frivolous* or *exorbitant*” when compared with the “Innocency and Sincerity” of Jesus.⁵²

In the “*raising of the dead*” category, More reported Jesus’s “*reall and true*” resurrections of Lazarus, the daughter of Jairus in Gadarenes, and the son of the widow in Nain, as well as giving a brief reference to the apostles raising the dead.⁵³ The resurrection of Jesus himself was referenced in seven different works, including an argument against transubstantiation in the form of defining the characteristics of Jesus’s body, e.g. his body had extension and place hence the stone had to be rolled away for him to leave the sepulchre.⁵⁴ In contrast, More suggested that the young bride Apollonius restored to life whilst she was being carried to her funeral in Rome was probably just in a trance and, knowing this, the Devil notified Apollonius of the opportunity to ‘resurrect’ her.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ More, *GMG*, IV.ix p. 121. From Philostratus, *Apollonius*, I.ix, V.xliii & IV.x.

⁵¹ More, *GMG*, IV.vii pp. 113-5. From *AKJV*, Luke 8:26-36 & Mark 5:6-13.

⁵² More, *GMG*, IV.ix p. 122. From Philostratus, *Apollonius*, IV.xx, II.iv & IV.xxv

⁵³ More, *GMG*, IV.v p. 109; IV.x p. 122 & V.xi p. 163. From *AKJV*, John 11:39-44; Mark 5:22-43, Luke 8:41-56; Luke 7:11-7, Mark 7:11-5; Acts 9:36-42.

⁵⁴ More, *BDRP*, iv pp. 27-30. From *AKJV*, Mark 16:1-18, Matthew 28:1-20, Luke 24:1-49, John 20:1-31.

⁵⁵ More, *GMG*, IV.x p. 122. From Philostratus, *Apollonius*, IV.xlvii.

More listed Jesus's "*predictions of things to come*" including the timing and manner of his own betrayal, death, and resurrection (that he allowed to happen), the destruction of Jerusalem, and the details of the life of the woman of Samaria.⁵⁶ For Apollonius, More listed eleven cases of predicting the future or distant events (discussed in chapters five and seven), but he summarily dismissed them all as "no more than is performed by ordinary Witches".⁵⁷

In addition, More celebrated further examples of Jesus's miraculous powers over physical matter and natural forces including, "*His turning water into wine; The Miraculous draught of Fish; His driving the buyers and sellers out of the Temple; His walking on the Sea, and his rebuking of the Winds.*"⁵⁸ More also reported other miracles of Jesus including his virgin conception,⁵⁹ the star that guided others to his birthplace,⁶⁰ and the earthquake and darkness at the crucifixion.⁶¹ More could not resist extending his comparison of Jesus and Apollonius to compare the celebrations accompanying their births: one heralded by a "Heavenly Melody of the holy *Angels*", and the other a "dance and roundelay of the musical *Swans*".⁶² More also noted the "Divine power" that aided the apostles, including being transported through the air, and being visited and rescued from prison by angels.⁶³ However, for these cases More failed to note the similarities with some of the demonic magic cases that I shall review in chapter six. More was unable to find any inherent objective differences between the miraculous and supernatural effects of Jesus and Apollonius. More even conceded that demons were capable of producing the same effects as Jesus (as the

⁵⁶ More, *GMG*, IV.viii pp. 119-20. From *AKJV*, Matthew 17:22, 20:18, 26:2, 26:23, 26:45, Mark 14:18, 14:41-4, John 10:11; Matthew 26:2, Mark 8:31, 10:34, Luke 18:32-3; John 2:19, Matthew 17:9, 26:2, 26:32, Mark 8:31, 10:34, Luke 18:32-3; Luke 21:9-24; John 4:6-26.

⁵⁷ More, *GMG*, IV.x pp. 123-4. From Philostratus, *Apollonius*, V.iii, I.xxxiii & xxxvi, V.xxiv, I.xxiii, IV.xxxiv, IV.iii, I.xxii, IV.xliii, V.xiii, VIII.xxiii & xxv, VIII.xxv-xxvi. See chapter five, p. 166 and chapter seven, pp. 225-6 in this thesis.

⁵⁸ More, *GMG*, IV.viii pp. 117-8. From *AKJV*, John 2:7-10, 4:46; Luke 5:1-9, John 21:4-11; Matthew 21:12-4, John 2:14-23, Mark 11:15-8, Luke 19:45-6; Mark 6:45-53, Matthew 14:22-34, John 6:15-21; Luke 8:23-5, Matthew 8:24-7, Mark 4:37-41.

⁵⁹ More, *GMG*, IV.i, p. 99; *DH*, 'Nativity', p. 495; *BDRP*, iv pp. 28-9. From *AKJV*, Matthew 1:18-25 & Luke 1:26-38.

⁶⁰ More, *AA*, 'Preface', sig. B3. From *AKJV*, Matthew 2:2.

⁶¹ More, *GMG*, IV.xiii p. 131; *AA*, 'Preface', sig. B3; *DH*, 'Passion', p. 498. From *AKJV*, Mark 15:33-8, Matthew 27:45-51, Luke 23:44-5.

⁶² More, *GMG*, IV.ii pp. 101-3. From *AKJV*, Luke 2:10-14 and from Philostratus, *Apollonius*, I.v.

⁶³ More, *GMG*, V.xi p. 163. From *AKJV*, Acts 8:39, 5:19, 12:7-10.

Jews had claimed) although he argued God would not permit the impersonation or impeding of the true Messiah.⁶⁴

More thus resorted to his first and most subjective criterion of his “touch-stone”—was there anything to be gained by making these claims?⁶⁵ Firstly, More discredited Philostratus’s biography describing it as “a mixt business partly true and partly false”.⁶⁶ Secondly, he compared the moral character and motives of the wonder-workers. He claimed Jesus was “the most illustrious Example of *the Divine life*”, possessing a “*humble, passive, Soul-melting, self-afflicting and self-resigning Divinity*”. Whilst Apollonius had the virtues of justice, temperance and knowledge, More claimed his main vice was “*Pride*” as evidenced by “his whole Life being nothing else but a lofty strutting on the stage of the Earth [...] to gather *Honour and Applause* to himself” and summarised “how rank his whole History smells of *the Animal Life*”.⁶⁷ Thirdly, More argued Jesus’s miracles were “sound and necessary, of weighty and usefull importance”, whilst those of Apollonius were “either vainly affected, slight and frivolous, or else infernal and diabolical”.⁶⁸ More even claimed Jesus’s turning water into wine and walking on water were not done for “any *Vanity or Ostentation*, but out of a *Principle of Love and kind affection*”.⁶⁹ The fly in the ointment of More’s tenuous morality argument was Jesus’s cursing of the fruitless fig tree. He even acknowledged that this showed a “ridiculous kinde of *Ferocity*, with a semblance of *Injustice*”. In the Bible, Jesus explained it was a demonstration of the power given to those who had faith in God, however More presented the common Christian apologetic interpretation that this case was a metaphor for the divine punishment and decline of the spiritually barren Jews.⁷⁰ Evaluating More’s comparison exercise, it is evident that he failed to identify any distinguishing characteristics of a miracle, beyond whether or not it was described as such in the Bible.

⁶⁴ More, *GMG*, I.i-ii pp. 137-40.

⁶⁵ See chapter three, p. 102.

⁶⁶ More, *GMG*, IV.ii p. 102.

⁶⁷ More, *GMG*, V.i p. 137, IV.xii p. 127, IV.xi pp. 124-5 & IV.ii p. 102.

⁶⁸ More, *GMG*, IV.x p. 124.

⁶⁹ More, *GMG*, IV.viii p. 117.

⁷⁰ More, *GMG*, IV.viii p. 118 & VIII.xiii p. 416. From *AKJV*, Matthew 21:18-22, Mark 11:12-24. See also Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit & Tremper Longman III, eds., *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press Academic, 1998), ‘Fig Tree’, p. 283.

4.4 Biblical Prophecy

As discussed in chapter two, sceptics mocked the Bible as irrelevant and ridiculous and More responded by attempting to render abstruse apocalyptic prophecies intelligible. He claimed that fulfilled prophecies were “one of the most irrefragable Arguments” for the proof of God, the afterlife and the truth of Christianity.⁷¹ Some historians such as Tulloch criticised More’s confidence in interpreting biblical prophecy as indicative of a mind “becoming weakened in the intoxication of its own delusions”.⁷²

More set out four rules for judging prophetic interpretation, thus attempting to organise and rationalise the subject just as natural philosophers sought regularity in nature.⁷³ The first rule was to consider the context and language of the prophet. The second was to be consistent in the interpretation of a word, especially within a single prophecy. The third was to elevate the validity of an interpretation if it concerned “the affairs of Religion and the Church of God”. The fourth rule was to give credit to “a Minde unprejudiced and unbiassed by any outward respects”. More acknowledged it was rare to be free of prejudice and recommended examining the interpreter in respect of the first three rules and “other firm Principles of Reason and Knowledge”, rather than the “performance” of the interpretation.⁷⁴

More listed a large number of short Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah for proving “*That Jesus, whom we worship, is the very Christ.*”⁷⁵ He was confident that ancient sources had been carefully and precisely copied and rejected Jewish counterarguments of mistranslations and misinterpretations.⁷⁶ He explained that the prophecies were comprehensible, absolute (not conditional), fulfilled in the New

⁷¹ More, *PP-SSD*, p. 3; More, *DD-45*, V.xiv p. 331.

⁷² Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, p. 346.

⁷³ Almond, ‘Apocalypse’, p. 192.

⁷⁴ More, *ME-SP*, I.ix pp. 259-61.

⁷⁵ More, *GMG*, VII.ii p. 283. Paraphrase from *AKJV* John 7:26; Acts 9:22.

⁷⁶ More, *GMG*, VII.ix, p. 314.

Testament, impartial (due to their Jewish origins), and credible because the prophets had often performed miracles confirming their divine connections.⁷⁷

More detailed thirty-three prophecies from twenty-eight sections of nine Old Testament books from Genesis to Malachi that foretold nine “main Marks and Characters of the Person of the *Messiah*”, that More selected to match the life of Jesus and prove his candidacy as the Messiah. The nine categories were: “[1.] the Messiah was to be a Sacrifice for sinne. 2. That he was to rise from the dead. 3. That he was to ascend into Heaven. 4. That he was to be worshipped as God. 5. That he was to be an eminent Light to the Nations; 6. And welcomely received by them. What is meant by His Rest shall be glorious. 7. That he was to abolish the Superstition of the Gentiles. 8. And that his Kingdome shall have no end. 9. That all these Characters are competible [compatible] to Jesus whom we worship, and to him only.”⁷⁸

Some of the prophecies presented are a bit vague. For example, More explained how the “natural sense” of Malachi 3:1 “plainly” described Jesus coming to the temple, “*Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.*”⁷⁹ Other prophecies seem to be a more exact match, such as Psalm 22 verses 16 and 18, “*The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me, they pierced my hands and my feet*” and “*They parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture*”, corresponding to specific details of Jesus’s crucifixion.⁸⁰

Fulfilled prophecies and accompanying miracles were More’s evidence that the prophets were genuine, such as the unnamed “man of God out of *Juda*”, whose accurate predictions of the rending of the altar at Bethel and the drying up and

⁷⁷ More, *GMG*, VII.i pp. 280-1.

⁷⁸ More, *GMG*, VII.i p. 280 & VII.viii p. 308.

⁷⁹ More, *GMG*, VII.iii p. 290. From *AKJV*, Malachi 3:1; Matthew 21:12-5, Mark 11:15-8, Luke 19:45-8 & John 2:14-21.

⁸⁰ More, *GMG*, VII.xii pp. 329-30. From *AKJV*, Psalm 22:16 & 18, Matthew 27:35, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:33-4, John 10: 23-4.

restoration of King Jeroboam's hand gave credit to his prophecies.⁸¹ In contrast, 'false prophets' would simply "commune with their own *Fancies*", such as "that blinde Guide" and "highly-adored *Enthusiast*", Hendrik Niclaes.⁸² Prophecy was relayed from God via his prophets or angel messengers and served as "*a special Providence*", giving warnings of the future. For example, both Abraham and Lot were warned by angels before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.⁸³

More published his "*Alphabet of Prophetick Iconisms*" because prophetic visions and dreams, "being both Phantasms impressed on the Imagination", required wisdom and providence to interpret.⁸⁴ This dictionary listed common interpretations of terms, often based on biblical cases. For example the entry for "*Worship*" describes "the *bowing of the Body* being a fit Symbol of submitting the Mind and Will to his power to whom we doe this homage" and was illustrated by Joseph's first dream, in which his brothers' sheaves bowed to his sheaf.⁸⁵ "*Sun, Moon and Stars*" had several interpretations including spiritual light, natural glory and power, political (King, Queen and nobility on the national scale and father, mother and children on the family scale), and mystical (stars as angels). Joseph's second dream was used to exemplify the political interpretation as the sun, moon and eleven stars (being his father, mother and brothers) made obeisance to Joseph.⁸⁶

The apocalyptic prophecies of Daniel and John are a mixture of dreams, visions, and revelations from angels.⁸⁷ The contents are so bizarre that even More, who claimed they were partially fulfilled, did not think they should be understood literally. More was confident that his rules and 'alphabet' methodology for prophecy was as formulaic as translating a language using dictionaries and grammars.⁸⁸ However, there was no contemporary consensus about the timescale of the apocalypse: some thought the End of Days had begun, others (such as the Fifth Monarchy Men)

⁸¹ More, *GMG*, VII.i pp. 280-1. From *AKJV*, 1 Kings 13:1-6.

⁸² More, *GMG*, V.xvii p. 201, X.xiii p. 533 & VI.xii p. 247.

⁸³ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 220. See *AKJV*, Genesis 18:2, 16-33 & Genesis 19:1-25.

⁸⁴ More, *ME-SP*, I.v p. 227.

⁸⁵ More, *ME-SP*, I.ix pp. 258-9. From *AKJV*, Genesis 37:5-8.

⁸⁶ More, *ME-SP*, I.viii pp. 251-2. From *AKJV*, Genesis 37:9-10.

⁸⁷ See *AKJV*, Daniel 2 & 12 and Revelation. For a neat synopsis, see Johnston, *Revelation Restored*, pp. xi-xxi.

⁸⁸ More, *ME-SP*, 'The Preface to the Reader', p. 186. See also More, *PP-SSD*, p. 2.

believed the Kingdom of Christ was imminent, and others (including More) thought it was still some way in the future.⁸⁹

It is worth noting that psychologists have identified several reasons why people might misattribute cause and effect and interpret visions and dreams as prophetic, including the ‘availability heuristic’, hindsight bias and a poor understanding of randomness and coincidence. The availability heuristic is a mental shortcut that seeks the most readily available explanation for an experience. Thus a dream or vision that feels profound (dreams and hallucinations often include powerful emotional components) will be interpreted as prophecy more readily in a culture where divine revelation is a valid and commonly discussed explanation. Hindsight bias is a common memory distortion and reinterpretation of a prior experience to more closely match a specific event, including suppressing recall of irrelevant instances and details. Finally, people generally have a poor grasp of probability and underestimate the frequency of coincidences.⁹⁰ A relevant example would be to consider that if the likelihood of the events in a dream coincidentally matching subsequent real world events is estimated as 1 in a million (for context, the chance of being killed by lightning in any one year is 1 in 300,000), and the average person remembers one dream per night, then in one year there is approximately 0.0365% chance of one match for any one person [probability of no match in one year = $(0.999999)^{365} \approx 0.999635$]. This seems unlikely, but with a current UK adult population of about 50 million, that would equate to over 18,000 matches per year.⁹¹ By investigating and reflecting on our own cognitive biases in this way, we are better able to understand and be empathetic to the assumptions and conclusions of contemporaries than earlier historians, such as Popkin and Tulloch, who ridiculed More’s engagement with biblical prophecy.⁹²

⁸⁹ Johnston, *Revelation Restored*, pp. 1-66; Paul J. Korshin, ‘Queuing and waiting: the Apocalypse in England, 1660-1750’ in C. A. Patrides & Joseph Wittreich, eds., *The Apocalypse in English Renaissance thought and literature* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1984), 240-65.

⁹⁰ French & Stone, *Anomalistic Psychology*, pp. 115-40.

⁹¹ Adapted from John Allen Paulos, *Innumeracy* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), pp. 21-45, 51-3. See also David Hand, *The Improbability Principle* (London: Transworld - Penguin Random House, 2014), pp. 137-8.

⁹² See chapter one, p. 39 and chapter four, p. 139.

4.5 Providence

God's *providentia* [foresight] was generally understood in Early Modern England to manifest itself in the form of strange or extreme natural phenomena and mystical dreams or experiences that were interpreted as omens or judgements. There was an "explosion" of printed texts, many of them cheap broadsides, ballads and pamphlets, between 1560 and 1640 detailing 'strange news' of providential events, indicative of the appetite for both entertainment and information on the subject.⁹³ The reporting of prodigies continued through the Civil War and the rest of the seventeenth century, especially as political propaganda, but also as sectarian and moral messages, and examples of natural history, and they had a strong popular appeal.⁹⁴ In the Protestant worldview, God's governance of the world and human affairs was maintained through providence without the need for direct divine intervention in the form of miracles. More's understanding was of "an all-seeing eye of Providence that takes notice of all our actions to reward or punish them."⁹⁵ Thus providence [*"pronoëa"*] had a "bright side" (*"Lampropronoëa"*) comprising beneficial gifts, superintendence of nature and positive portents, and a "black side" (*"Melampronoëa"*) constituting judgements, omens of disaster, death and destruction.⁹⁶

4.5.1 Melampronoëa

Both biblical miracles and signs of the apocalypse included some extraordinary natural phenomena, thus More considered similar events to be examples of providence. For example, More regarded any large or "universal" flood that could "cover vast Kingdomes" to be providential divine punishment, as in "the Deluges of *Deucalion*, of *Ogyges*, and that of *Noah*."⁹⁷ Similarly, extraordinary earthquakes, eclipses (lunar and solar) and shooting stars (comets or meteors) were predicted to

⁹³ Walsham, *Providence*, pp. 33-51.

⁹⁴ Burns, *Wonders*, pp. 1-148.

⁹⁵ More, *ET*, 'Mastix his letter', p. 305.

⁹⁶ More, *PP*, 'The Interpretation Generall' p. 429.

⁹⁷ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 235 & VI.i p. 214. Probably from Ovid, *Metamorphosis* (London: Robert Young, 1628) translated by "G.S.", I pp. 10-2; probably from Plato, *Timaeus*; from *AKJV*, Genesis 7 [All three floods were mentioned together in various texts, for example Walter Raleigh, *The History of the World* (London: Walter Burre, 1614, 1617), I.vii pp. 98-109]. In Greek mythology, Deucalion was warned by his father, Prometheus, that Zeus would flood the world in anger at a human sacrifice. He saved himself and his wife by building a wooden chest and floating for nine days. Ogyges was king of Attica when a great flood occurred, variously described as localised or global. In both ancient Greek stories, and the biblical flood of Noah, most of the people of the world were reportedly killed.

herald the apocalypse at the opening of the sixth seal and also signalled Jesus's birth (the guiding star) and crucifixion (earthquake and eclipse).⁹⁸ Thus More attributed the “universal” quakes of 367 and 1289,⁹⁹ and islands and cities “swallowed” by the ground or the sea—such as the ancient Greek cities of Helike and Boura and “an ancient *Atlantick* Island [Atlantis]”—to providence.¹⁰⁰

Since the ancient Babylonians, many celestial events, including solar eclipses, were understood and could be predicted,¹⁰¹ but they could also be interpreted as divine omens. More surmised how providence had caused “those scummy spots” on the sun's surface to spread and block the light during the crucifixion of Jesus.¹⁰² Similarly, More considered providence to be responsible for the eclipses or periods of darkness at the death of Roman Emperor Julius Caesar [died 15 March 44 BCE],¹⁰³ in the time of Byzantine Emperor Justinian [ruled 527-565 CE],¹⁰⁴ in the time of Byzantine Empress Irene [Empress Consort, Regent and then Regnant from 775-802 CE],¹⁰⁵ and the lunar and solar eclipses just before and after the death of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V [died 21 September 1558].¹⁰⁶ When extraordinary events are terrifying and unexpected—like severe earthquakes, floods, meteors and eclipses—the availability heuristic and a lack of awareness of coincidence probabilities combined with our inherent human ability to (over) detect patterns and regularities make coincidences seem meaningful. Attributing the cause to God thus provides a reassuring explanation that reinforces religious belief.¹⁰⁷

⁹⁸ More, *GMG*, V.xvi p. 184, IV.xiii p. 131 and More, *DH*, ‘Passion’, pp. 497-500, 498. From *AKJV*, Revelation 6:12-4; Mark 15:33-8, Matthew 27:45-51, Luke 23:44-45; Matthew 2:2.

⁹⁹ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 235. Source not identified.

¹⁰⁰ More, *DD-123*, II.ix pp. 223-4. From Plato, *Timaeus*.

¹⁰¹ Patricia Fara, *Science – a Four Thousand Year History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 14-5.

¹⁰² More, *AA*, ‘Preface’, sig. B3-B3v. From *AKJV*, Mark 15:33, Matthew 27:45, Luke 23:44-5.

¹⁰³ More, *IS*, III.xix p. 540 and More, *GMG*, IV.xv p. 134. From Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, II.xxx p. 17.

¹⁰⁴ More, *IS*, III.xix p. 540 and More, *GMG*, IV.xv p. 134. More cites Cedrenus [George Kedrenos] but I haven't found this case.

¹⁰⁵ More, *IS*, III.xix p. 540. From Theophanes, *The Chronicle of Theophanes*, translated by Harry Turtledove (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 275, p. 154.

¹⁰⁶ More, *GMG*, IV.xv p. 134. Source not identified.

¹⁰⁷ Justin L. Barrett, *Why would anyone believe in God?* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2004), pp. 51-5.

Through his meticulous observations, the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe [1546-1601] proved in 1577 that comets were not sub-lunar (i.e. atmospheric) phenomena, but travelled among the planets.¹⁰⁸ More seemed uncharacteristically ignorant of the distinction and grouped meteors and comets together, describing them as “*Sublunary* and of combustible matter actually set on fire.” He considered many to be providential, such as the extraordinary comet that followed the death of King Demetrius of Syria [died 150 BCE], describing how “the brightness of its fiery shining turned Night into Day.”¹⁰⁹ More noted that Cardan and other philosophers proposed comets as “*Signes* or *Causes*” of droughts, perhaps because the fiery mass could take the moisture from the atmosphere. He recounted two instances in 1477 and 1539 of droughts and extremely hot weather following comets that “parched the Corn upon the ground, set whole Woods on fire, and dried Fountains and Rivers.”¹¹⁰ Meteors could also cause direct damage for example in 1543 when “the Tail of a Comet [...] flew off, and falling into a River drunk up all the water of it”, and Pliny claimed the fields of Ariccia, near Rome, caught fire from falling meteorites.¹¹¹

One other destructive providential force reported by More was thunder, including the thunder of meteorites. This may seem improbable, but in fact the sonic booms caused by the deceleration of meteors through the atmosphere can be potentially devastating.¹¹² More reported how a man travelling from Leipzig to Torgau “was so consumed by *Thunder*, that not a bit of him was to be seen, his whole body being dissolved into Vapour and Exhalations, and blown away with the wind.” More explained how the “subtile, glib and furiously-agitated elements” of the meteor were unstoppable and had the capability to “disjoyn every *congeries* of Atoms” of

¹⁰⁸ John Gribbin, *Science: A History 1543-2001* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), pp. 45-6.

¹⁰⁹ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 233. Probably from Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Physical Science in the time of Nero: being a translation of the Quaestiones Naturales of Seneca [Natural Questions]* translated by John Clarke, (London: Macmillan and Co., 1910), VII.xv.

¹¹⁰ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 233. Possibly from Cardano, but source not identified.

¹¹¹ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 234. From Daniel Sennert, *Epitome Naturalis Scientiae* (Wittenberg: 1618), IV.ii p. 267; From Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, II.cvii p. 48.

¹¹² For example, on 15th February 2013 the 19m wide Chelyabinsk meteor entered the atmosphere at 68,000kph and exploded at a height of 30km causing a bright flash, fragmentary meteorites (one of which was recovered and weighed 570kg) and the shock wave was powerful enough to damage thousands of buildings, which caused secondary injuries to many people. The energy of the explosion was equivalent to 500 kilotons of TNT, which was over 30 times that of the atomic bomb detonated at Hiroshima in 1945. See summary in Andrew Grant ‘Large meteor strikes underestimated’, *Science News*, 184:11 (November 2013), p. 6.

matter.¹¹³ Also, a theatre was “Thunder-struck” during the Vulcanalia festival in the reign of Roman Emperor Macrinus [ruled 217-8 CE].¹¹⁴ The prayers of a Legion of Christians during a war by Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius [ruled 161-180 CE] triggered “fire that fell from Heaven” that supposedly earned them the name “*Legio Fulminatrix*, the *Thundring Legion*”.¹¹⁵ Two extraordinary cases illustrated the supposed ability of thunder to transform soft or fluid bodies into rigid forms. The first described “hogsheads of wine turned into ice by Thunder”¹¹⁶ and the second case reported how some men were “thunderstruck” on the Greek island of Lemnos and “their bodies became so hard, rigid and stiff, as if they had been so many Statues, which imitated the same actions they were doing when they were alive, one seeming to eat, the other seeming to lift a pot to his mouth, a third to drink, &c.)”.¹¹⁷ More saw these cases as providential parallels to the miraculous transformation of Lot’s wife into a pillar of salt as divine punishment for her disobedience. Thunder and lightning were thus another form of God’s divine providence, illustrated by his “signal vengeance upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*”.¹¹⁸

Sometimes monstrous or terrifying spectres were reported to herald earthquakes, plagues, and other natural disasters as well as man-made disasters such as war. More reported these “astonishing Prodigies” of death and destruction as precedents for the similar phenomena expected before the apocalypse, when Jesus would return in judgement “attended with the heavenly Hosts, and the Archangel sounding a Trumpet before him”.¹¹⁹ For example, More reported one “terrible Prodigie” that appeared in the sky above Antioch for fifteen nights in May 349 CE before an earthquake ruined the city. This extraordinary “*Spectrum* in the Aire” was a “vast”

¹¹³ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 234. From Wolfgang Meurer, *Commentarii Meteorologici* (Leipzig: 1592), p. 140 [although I think More actually copied this case from Sennert, *Epitome Naturalis Scientiae*, IV.ii pp. 283-4].

¹¹⁴ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 234. Probably from Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, translated by Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1914-27), Vols. 1-9, LXXIX.xxv.

¹¹⁵ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 234. Probably from Dio, *Roman History*, LXXII.viii-x. ‘*Legio Fulminatrix*’ was only used in a comment detailing the miracle story added by Dio’s eleventh century editor, Joannes Xiphilinus. The legion was actually called ‘*Legio duodecima Fulminata*’, the ‘Thunderbolt Twelfth Legion’, and both terms were used in Dio’s account.

¹¹⁶ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 234. From Seneca, *Natural Questions*, II.xxxi [although I think More actually copied this case from Sennert, *Epitome Naturalis Scientiae*, IV.ii p. 283].

¹¹⁷ More, *GMG*, VI.viii pp. 234-5. Source possibly Cardano, *De Rerum Varietate Libri XVII*, VIII.xliii but not identified.

¹¹⁸ More, *GMG*, VI.viii p. 235. From *AKJV*, Genesis 9:24-6.

¹¹⁹ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 219. From *AKJV*, Revelation 5:11 & 8:2.

woman with a “horrid countenance” that frightened beholders “when she slash'd a whip which she had in her hand, the cracks thereof were so loud and dreadful.”¹²⁰ Three cases described apparitions that preceded devastating plagues: on a rainy night in Gallarta, Spain, an ox-drawn cart covered with fire disappeared into the ground, “both Cart, Oxen, Rusticks, and Fire and all”;¹²¹ in Peru a huge man “with his belly cut up and exenterated, and two children in his armes” appeared first to washerwomen warning of a pestilence and later was seen in the hills riding on horse-back “swifter then the wind”;¹²² and in Marche, Italy, between twelve and fifteen men “of huge and horrid statures” were seen scything in the fields yet the crop was not cut down.¹²³

More’s examples of “strange Prodigies” accompanying wars and invasions included: “the skirmishing of Armies in the Aire” above Arezzo, Italy, before the King of France invaded during the Italian Wars (1494-1559);¹²⁴ a cross seen in the East and a man so tall “his head seemed to touch the Heavens” which appeared to the Mexicans before their violent subjugation by the Conquistadors;¹²⁵ and, the Picts both hearing and seeing “fiery Armies in Heaven fighting with one another” before their destruction.¹²⁶ Most famous were the extraordinary phenomena prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE as reported by Josephus: a “flaming sword that hung over the City for a whole year together”; a “sudden light in the night-time” that lit up the temple and altar as “light as day” (perhaps a comet and a meteor); the heavy brass East gate of the temple opening by itself; a voice heard by the Priests in the temple at night during Pentecost saying “*Let us go hence*”; and an ominous apparition of chariots and soldiers in the sky.¹²⁷

¹²⁰ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 220. Possibly from Johannes Garibus, but source not identified.

¹²¹ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 219. From Cardano, *De Rerum Varietate*, XIV.lxix pp. 692-3.

¹²² More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 219. From Cardano, *De Rerum Varietate*, XV.lxxxii pp 748-9.

¹²³ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 219. From Henning Grosse, *Magica de Spectris et Apparitionibus Spiritu de Vaticiniis Divinationibus etc* (Leiden: 1656), I.cxxiv pp. 90-1.

¹²⁴ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 219. From Nicolai [Niccolò] Machiavelli, *Florentini disputationum de republica*, (Leiden: 1649), I.lvi pp. 156-7.

¹²⁵ More, *GMG*, VI.ii pp. 219-20. From Cardano, *De Rerum Varietate*, XV.lxxviii pp 716-7.

¹²⁶ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 220. Cardano, *De Rerum Varietate*, XV.lxxviii, p. 717.

¹²⁷ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 220. From Josephus, *Workes*, (1602), VII.xii p. 738 [(1737), VI.v]. See chapter three, p. 118 in this thesis.

It is helpful to reflect that a modern parallel to such extraordinary visions and apparitions would be hallucinations. These spontaneous and involuntary yet vivid internally-generated perception experiences can manifest in any sensory modality and can occur without an underlying mental disorder or external cause.¹²⁸ The powerful impact of such experiences should not be underestimated, and even in modern secular cultures many people who experience hallucinations frequently interpret them in a religious or paranormal belief framework as a coping or explanatory mechanism.¹²⁹

4.5.2 Lampropronea

More's light side of providence comprised gifts and messages from God, and the natural laws of the universe and superintendence of nature on earth. He explained, "there is a divine *Providence* that orders all things" from the movement of the planets, rotation of the earth and the properties of gravity on fluids, to the nature of plant seeds and the useful design of plants and animals (especially for the benefit of mankind).¹³⁰

As discussed earlier, More sought to reconcile Genesis with contemporary cosmology and syncretize pagan philosophers with Christian theology and claimed that the proof that Pythagoras was "initiated into the *Mosaical Theory*" was his "power of working Miracles" through God's providence.¹³¹ These providential 'miracles' included the prediction of earthquakes and the calming of plagues, violent winds, tempests, and raging seas and rivers. Pythagoras also had strange experiences, such as a river saying "with an audible and clear voice [...] *Salve Pythagora*", and how his thigh "glistened like Gold" when he showed it to a priest named Albaris, who "thence pronounced that he was *Apollo*."¹³² Plotinus was

¹²⁸ American Psychiatric Association, DSM-5 (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), II p. 87 & 'Appendix', p. 822; Richard P. Bentall, 'Hallucinatory Experiences', in Cardeña et al, eds., *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, 109-43, pp. 120-6.

¹²⁹ For a summary of recent research concerning hallucinations, see for example: French & Stone, *Anomalistic Psychology*, pp. 53-68; and Irwin, *Paranormal Belief*, pp. 96-101.

¹³⁰ More, AA, II.i-xii pp. 43-104.

¹³¹ More, CC, 'The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala', iii, p. 186 [(1662+), 'An Appendix to the Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala', i p. 101]. See chapter two, pp. 58-9 in this thesis.

¹³² "Iamblichus calls the River *Nessus*, *Porphyrius Caucasus*", More, CC, 'The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala', iii, pp. 186-7 [(1662+), 'An Appendix to the Defence of the Philosophick

similarly divinely gifted and “by the Majesty of his own Minde” was able to make the hostile magic rebound back on to his enemy, Olympius, with the result that “*his body it gathered like a purse, and his limbs beat one against another.*”¹³³

More explained that providence could employ strange natural phenomena, dreams and visions to herald positive events, not just negative ones. Apollonius’s birth was accompanied by strange lightning.¹³⁴ The vision of Apollo by Plato’s father prior to his son’s birth was “something highly miraculous”. Socrates had a dream of “a young Swan in his lap, which putting forth feathers a pace, of a sudden flew up into the Air, and sung very sweetly.” The next day Socrates identified the swan as the young Plato, and accepted him as his pupil.¹³⁵ Themistocles, a fifth-century BCE Athenian politician, fled a conspiracy and took refuge with his friend, Nicogenes. That night, Themistocles dreamt a dragon wound about his body, but then changed into an eagle and carried him a long way and set him down on a golden caduceus or herald’s staff “freeing him thus from immense fear and consternation of mind.” Subsequently, Nicogenes sent Themistocles to the wealthy Persian court safely concealed in a curtained coach used to transport women.¹³⁶

Themistocles’s providential dream seems uncannily prophetic when deciphered using More’s “*Alphabet of Prophetick Iconisms*”. The dragon signifies evil and the Devil, but “*For poor men to dream they ride upon an Eagle, it is good; for it signifies they will be supported and well relieved by the rich.*”¹³⁷ However, this is almost certainly an artefact of the way books on dream interpretation were constructed post hoc by the “*Onirocriticks*”¹³⁸ that More used, particularly “*Achmetes the son of Seiri*” [Achmet, possibly the Islamic mystic, Muhammad Ibn

Cabbala’, i pp. 101-2]. From Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, xix p. 44, xxviii pp. 64-5; and from Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras*, pp. 137-8.

¹³³ More, CC, ‘The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’, iii, p. 188 [(1662+), ‘An Appendix to the Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’, i p. 102]. From Porphyry, *On the Life of Plotinus* from *Plotinus: The Enneads* translated by Stephen MacKenna (New York: Larson Publications, 1966, 1992), x p. 8.

¹³⁴ More, ME-SP, II.iv p. 359. Probably from Philostratus, *Apollonius*, I.v.

¹³⁵ More, CC, ‘The Defence of the Threefold Cabbala’, iii pp. 187-8. From Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, translated by Robert Drew Hicks, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1925), 2 vols., Vol. 1, III (Plato) ii & v.

¹³⁶ More, PP-SSD, iii p. 25. From Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, translated by Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press & London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1914), Themistocles’, xxvi.

¹³⁷ More, ME-SP, I.vi pp. 234-5.

¹³⁸ Greek: *ónēir(os)* dream + *kritikós* skilled in judgment, critic.

Sirin, 653/4-728/9 CE] and Artemidorus Daldianus.¹³⁹ For example, the explanation for ‘Burial’ in More’s *Alphabet* details the providential dreams foretelling the relative success of two classical athletes: Leonas Syrus dreamed he was dead but not buried and was subsequently victorious but not crowned; and, Menander of Smyrna dreamed that he was both dead and buried and was consequently victorious and crowned. More explained that burial represented the ultimate consummation of one’s life and to be unburied implied “either of a more infamous death, or of hope of recovering into life.”¹⁴⁰

Providence could foretell significant events for the heathen as well as the godly. For example, the Aztec ruler Moctezuma II [c.1466-1520] was warned prior to the invasion of Mexico by the Spaniards; an augur foretold the building of Rome would take twelve hundred years; and the murder of Julius Caesar in the Senate was predicted and engraved on a brass table in the ancient sepulchre of Capys [supposed King of Alba, reigned 963-935 BCE]. More argued that unless one was “very grosly stupid”, that it is “far more rational, when *Events* answer to *Prophecies* of great concernment, to impute it to *Providence* rather than to *Chance*.”¹⁴¹

More believed in a guiding principle of “*Divine Sagacity*”, a “Gift of God” to those of pure spirit that operated as an essential moral compass for rational thought.¹⁴² More seemed to have been inspired to this conclusion by several apparently providential dreams and visions of his own. The *Divine Dialogues* character Bathynous dreamt he was presented with the “*Two Keys of Providence*”, representing heliocentrism as “*The true Systeme of the World*” and “*Amor Dei Lux Animae*” [‘The love of God is the light of the soul’]. Bathynous was disturbed from memorising the aphorisms of the latter by braying asses.¹⁴³ Tulloch was certain that Bathynous’s

¹³⁹ More, *ME-SP*, I.v pp. 226-32. See Artemidori Daldiani [Artemidorus Daldianus] & Achmetis Sereimi F. [Achmet], *Oneirocritica*, ed. by Nicolai Rigaltii (Paris: 1603).

¹⁴⁰ More, *ME-SP*, I.v pp. 231-2. From Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*, III.lxxxiv pp. 248-9.

¹⁴¹ More, *GMG*, VII.ii p. 282. From José de Acosta, *The Naturall and Morall Historie of the East and West Indies*, translated by E.G. (London: Val: Sims for Edward Blount and William Aspley, 1604), VII.xxiii p. 563; the works of scholar Marcus Terentius Varro [116-27 BCE] have not survived, but this detail survived in Censorinus, *De Die Natali*, translated by William Maude (New York: Cambridge Encyclopedia Co., 1900), I.vi/xvii; Vanini, *De Admirandis*, LII p. 389.

¹⁴² More, *CSPW*, (1662), ‘The Preface General’, pp. vii-viii.

¹⁴³ More, *DD-123*, III.xxviii-xxix pp. 481-92.

mystical dream was autobiographical, but Ward claimed that More had described it as a purely fictional device.¹⁴⁴

More recalled a dream from the early days of the civil war, in which he saw in the clouds to the North, a woman tenderly protecting a child on her lap. To the South, he saw a very old bearded man lying on his side on the horizon. The man was made of bright cloud illuminated by the moon, his arm rose and fell six or seven times, and he spoke “with an hollow voice much like thunder afarre off, *There is indeed love amongst you, but onely according to the flesh.*” More interpreted this dream to be a providential chastisement from God to the nation.¹⁴⁵

More recalled another dream, from when he was about fourteen or fifteen, in which he heard a “very shrill and piercing” trumpet and then found himself “in an open place”. As a thick mist thinned, he saw “an innumerable company of Angels, blew and purple colour'd about the shoulders, filled the heavens round about”. As the trumpet sounded louder, the vision grew clearer so he resisted waking himself up until the volume became intolerable. He noted that he was in full control, unlike an ordinary dream, and he felt such an “admirable Temper and frame of spirit” upon waking that he understood how similar experiences could be interpreted as divine inspiration.¹⁴⁶ More’s description perfectly matches a ‘lucid dream’ experience. These are rare but cross-cultural experiences that often include more control, auditory and kinaesthetic sensations, positive emotions, visual vividness and clarity of thought than normal dreams. Lucid dreams are such an intense and extraordinary experience that people often experience mood elevation upon waking.¹⁴⁷

Ward revealed More had admitted that the long and dramatic apocalyptic vision of Theomanes in the *Divine Dialogues* was his own experience.¹⁴⁸ Theomanes, a devoted theologian and associate of the character Philotheus, had exhausted himself studying the “Divine Oracles” and went for a walk in the fields where he

¹⁴⁴ Tulloch, *Rational Theology*, p. 317; Ward, *Life*, pp. 125-6.

¹⁴⁵ More, *ET*, ‘Mastix his letter’ pp. 309-11.

¹⁴⁶ More, *ET*, ‘Mastix his letter’ pp. 314-5.

¹⁴⁷ Stephen LaBerge, ‘Lucid Dreaming: Paradoxes of Dreaming Consciousness’, in Cardeña et al, eds., *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, 145-73, pp. 146-51, 166-7.

¹⁴⁸ Ward, *Life*, pp. 125-6.

spontaneously experienced a long and detailed ‘Vision of the seven Thunders’. As the thunders sounded, the vision revealed an apocalyptic landscape, with both the holy city of God saving the good and worthy people and the “infernal Caverns” from which demonic creatures brought forth corruption. At the sixth thunder Jesus began the Last Judgement and the pure souls ascended whilst angels sang so sweetly that Theomanes experienced rapture: “my Soul was so enraptured with the sight and with the Musick, that my Heart melted, mine Eyes flowed over with tears, and my Spirits failed within me, for very excess of Joy.” Finally, the seventh thunder sounded, and fire and brimstone fell on those people that remained on the Earth.¹⁴⁹ Despite its similarities, More clarified (through Theomanes) that he did not claim this was true divine revelation after the manner of Saint John.¹⁵⁰

Whilst More was grappling with the Lurianic Kabbalah in 1675, he experienced a nightmare. He dreamt that an eagle flew towards him and let him stroke it. However, the bird had no muscle, only dry bones, and the beak was an odd shape. The eagle turned into a small boy with both his hair and tunic coloured blue and white. More discoursed with the boy, who said he was from “Sion” and believed in many Gods. At this point More denounced the boy as Satan, ordered him to go and began to kick him repeatedly, even after the boy turned into a bee. Upon waking, More interpreted the eagle-boy-bee nightmare as a metaphor for his understanding of the Kabbalah as “a dangerous, destructive, and pantheistic philosophy” in which all matter was merely debased spirit, implying everything was God and God was divisible, the bones of the eagle representing the “trace of divine wisdom” that remained.¹⁵¹ These personal mystical experiences had a significant impact on More that I will revisit in chapter eight.

4.6 “Legendary Lies and false Miracles”

Whilst More made allowances for divine providence he was adamant that divine miracles ceased at the end of the apostolic era and any subsequent claims must be

¹⁴⁹ More, *DD-45*, V.xxxvi-xxxviii pp. 435-50.

¹⁵⁰ More, *DD-45*, V.xxxviii-xl, pp. 450-5.

¹⁵¹ More, *OO* (1679), ‘Fundamenta Philosophiae sive Cabbalae Aeto-paedo-melissaeae’, pp. 521-8. See translation and commentary in Coudert, ‘Kabbalist Nightmare’, pp. 633-52.

“*Legendary Lies and false Miracles*”.¹⁵² Protestants rejected papist miracles as delusions, frauds or tricks of the Devil, and, as the End of Days approached, cited the Bible’s caution, “For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”¹⁵³ More objected to Roman Catholic claims to perform miracles ‘on demand’, such as transubstantiation and exorcism, and he considered the miracles associated with Catholic saints, icons and relics to be implausible and idolatrous. More argued these superstitious beliefs and fake miracles were cynically designed to bolster the power of papist priests and false prophets over the people. Through the *Divine Dialogues* character, Philotheus, More cautioned against the “Impostures” of “false Miracles to deceive the people” including “Trances, Quakings, Possessions by irresistible Powers, pretended Inspirations, [...] as well as those old Cheats and Juggles or lying Miracles of ancient Paganism, or of modern Antichristianism.”¹⁵⁴

Whilst More had argued that Apollonius’s wonders were demon-assisted magic, he did not credit the alleged miracles of the Islamic Prophet Muhammad (“Mahomet”) as having any real effects at all. More described Muhammad as a “pretended Prophet” suffering an “*Enthusiastick* madness” and accused him of pride, “Political craft”, and “insatiable lust and ambition” in seeking to elevate himself to a position of power over the people. More ridiculed twelve of Muhammad’s ‘miracles’ including the encounters with the Angel Gabriel, the trees that spoke, wept and moved for him, and the famous splitting of the moon (Muhammad claimed to have divided the moon into two parts, made a half go up each of his sleeves and come out at his neck, before re-joining them and restoring the moon to the heavens).¹⁵⁵ More disparaged Muhammad’s miracles as being “very *foolish* and *ridiculous*” and lacking beneficial purpose such as healing others.¹⁵⁶ As with Apollonius, More attacked Muhammad’s credibility accusing him of being a “*Political Enthusiast*”, and of exhibiting “cracktness and Lunacy” and “*Immorality*”. More described

¹⁵² More, *ME-SP*, II.xxii p. 471.

¹⁵³ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 87-8; Walsham, *Providence*, pp. 226-32; *AKJV*, Matthew 24:24.

¹⁵⁴ More, *DD-45*, V.v p. 243.

¹⁵⁵ More, *GMG*, V.ix-x pp.155-60. From Johannes Andreas [Juan Andrés], *The confusion of Muhamed's sect, or a confutation of the Turkish Alcoran*, translated by I. N. (London: H. Blunden, 1652), vi p. 110, viii pp. 131-44, x pp. 187-8, 192 [e.g. from Muhammad, *The Koran [Qur'an]*, translated by N. J. Dawood (London: Penguin Books, 1997), liv ‘The Moon’].

¹⁵⁶ More, *GMG*, IX.i p. 455 & V.x p. 160.

Muhammad's moral character as "*insatiably Venereous*", referring to his many wives, adultery and his child bride, and also his "*Cruelty*" in legislating the death penalty for unbelievers.¹⁵⁷

More's confirmation bias in favour of Judeo-Christian miracles and against all others is exemplified by his combination of dismissive scepticism concerning Muhammad's miracles but ready acceptance of accounts of miracles of Jesus and the Apostles from the same sources, i.e. the "*Alcoran*" [Qur'an] and "*Zuna*" [Sunnah]; "That Christ knew the very thoughts of mens hearts, that he raised the dead, that he healed men of incurable diseases, that he gave sight to the blind, and made the dumb to speak. That the Apostles of Christ, *Matthew*, *Peter* and *Paul*, healed one *Habib Anaiar* of the Leprosie at *Antioch*, and raised the King's daughter from the dead; as also gave sight to a childe that was born blinde."¹⁵⁸ Fundamentally, More would not accept Muhammad's wonders were genuine divine miracles because to do so would give validity to the rival religion of Islam.

More was equally biased against Roman Catholicism and denounced the cult of saints, considering their veneration and their role as intercessors between God and man to be 'Antichristian' idolatry and "*Spiritual Fornication*".¹⁵⁹ He argued that men had no right to receive veneration when angels had refused it.¹⁶⁰ More regarded the appointment of saints as patrons and tutelaries of countries, cities and towns, and of protective saints for specific diseases, rural industries, trades and professions, all of whom had separate feast days, festivals, rites, customs and relics and icons, as "Idolatrous and Paganly-Superstitious", being akin to pagan protective deities. He mocked the practice with a long list of examples including Saint George for England, Saint Clare "to clear the eyes", Saint Feriol for geese and Saint Crispin for shoe-makers.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ More, *GMG*, V.ix-x pp. 157-60.

¹⁵⁸ More, *GMG*, V.xii p. 166. From Andrés, *Muhammed's sect*, i p. 10, ix pp. 201-4 [from Muhammad, *Qur'an*, xix 'Mary' & xxxvi 'Ya' Sin'].

¹⁵⁹ More, *ME-MI*, I.x p. 33. From *AKJV*, Luke 4:8.

¹⁶⁰ More, *ME-MI*, I.ix, p. 28. From *AKJV*, Revelation 19:10. See also More, *AI*, i-ii pp. 1-40; More, *AAI*, passim.

¹⁶¹ More, *ME-SP*, I.xvii pp. 323-5.

More argued that some “*lying Miracles, [...] pious Frauds [...] Forgeries and guilefull Fictions*” of the saints were so absurd they actually served to strengthen the arguments of the atheists. He briefly described nine of the miracles he found most implausible, including: Saint Denis of Paris who, “when his Head was struck off, walked four or five mile with it in his hand”; Saint Margaret of Antioch “being swallowed by a Dragon, she making a Crosse in the Dragon's belly, burst him in pieces, and so was delivered”; and, the head of Saint Winifred of Wales “which being cut off, sprung up and grew on again, but lopt off the second time, by its fall gave the rise to a Fountain or Well.” More denigrated the healing and resurrection miracles of saints, such as: Saint Germain of Auxerre repaying his host’s hospitality by restoring a cow and calf to life; the severed hand of Saint Leo the Great [Pope Leo I] being reattached; the lower legs of another saint (whom I have not been able to identify) being restored; and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux being healed after an image of the Nursing Madonna squirted him with her breast milk.¹⁶²

More also derided the cult of relics, listing “*A Rabble of incredible Reliques*”, including some items miraculously preserved from the life of Jesus, and numerous body parts of saints. There were simply too many of each item, thus most must be fake: “What would the world say to the credibility of three Tuns of Teeth from the Jaws of one Saint; [...] What to the Fore-skin of Christ shewn also in five several places at once? [...] and as many glasses of the Virgin's Milk as would fill all the vessels in a countrey-dairy?” Unsurprisingly, More dismissed and mocked the alleged miracles associated with relics, such as crucifixes speaking or being moved fifty miles overnight through the air, as “a pretty Figment to furnish out the Faith of Fools.” In particular, he mentioned the holy house of Mary transported overnight by angels from the holy land to Italy in the thirteenth century [Santa Casa di Loreto, Italy]. More claimed Catholic priests deliberately manufactured icons “to rowl their eyes, to weep also, and to swear”. The provenance and claims could also simply be fabricated, such as “An Image of the Virgin *Mary* made by S. *Luke*, to which an Angelical Statue of Marble was seen often to bow.”¹⁶³

¹⁶² More, *ME-MI*, II.viii p. 133. Most of these are in *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Varagine, but I think it more likely More was using a secondary source that I have not identified.

¹⁶³ More, *ME-MI*, II.viii pp. 133-6. Source not identified.

The Catholic ritual miracles of the Mass and Exorcism also drew criticism from More. He regarded exorcism as a cynical performance agreed upon “betwixt the feignedly possessed and the Exorcist” and mocked the idea that salt, candles, herbs, bells, oil or water were capable of “putting to flight the Prince of darkness with all his Retinue”.¹⁶⁴ More parodied the veneration of the Mass as “*Bread-worshipping*”.¹⁶⁵ He argued this “monstrous doctrine” exalted the priest to great esteem because “*to transform a piece of Bread into the real Person of Christ, is little less then to create our Creatour.*”¹⁶⁶ He explained that transubstantiation was metaphysically impossible because a body could not be physically present simultaneously in so many places at such distances apart and yet be entire in each of those places (without remarking how this could be any different for Jesus’s miracles that replicated loaves and fishes).¹⁶⁷

More also dismissed the miracles associated with the Mass, such as claims that: a child’s first words were ‘to Mass!’; that it sustained people on a long fast (even though they were not physically present at the ritual); that it struck the chains from captives; and that if taken by people who had not fasted, they would be transformed into the shapes of horses or pigs.¹⁶⁸ More claimed priests deliberately and deceitfully invented such miraculous claims for power and “for the love of filthy lucre.” Masses were for sale in exchange for any desired outcome: “for both the living and the dead, for the sick and for the sound, for both man and beast; that he can thereby deliver Souls out of Purgatory, free men from the plague, heal cattel, drive away fevers, or prevent the tooth-ach, recover lost goods, cure the soreness of the eyes, give victory against a mans enemies, procure a good husband or wife, and what not”.¹⁶⁹

More concluded that the Roman Catholic doctrine of Purgatory was an exploitative construct enabling the priesthood to control people by fear and to extract their money. He considered the “extravagant Poetical Fabulosities” of its horrible tortures to be so “incredible” that they were more likely to cause people to disbelieve in the

¹⁶⁴ More, *ME-MI*, II.viii p. 134 & I.xviii p. 65.

¹⁶⁵ More, *ME-MI*, I.xiii p. 44.

¹⁶⁶ More, *ME-MI*, I.xv pp. 53.

¹⁶⁷ More, *ME-MI*, II.iv pp.108-9.

¹⁶⁸ More, *ME-MI*, II.viii p. 134. Source not identified.

¹⁶⁹ More, *ME-MI*, I.xv p. 53.

afterlife altogether. More claimed that priests faked appearances of ghosts, angels, and the Virgin Mary through elaborate disguises, complaining that such frauds undermined belief in genuine apparitions. He explained how priests cynically took advantage of folkloric beliefs in corpse candles (also called will-o'-the-wisps, jack o'-lanterns and deadmen's candles) through "the contrivance of moving Lights in Church-yards, by fastning wax-Candles on the backs of live Crab-fishes, which must be interpreted the unquiet Souls of them that are tortured in Purgatory, and seek relief by the Prayers and Offerings of good people."¹⁷⁰ More thus soundly rejected Catholic miracle claims as frauds or "fabulous Impossibilities" and concluded "that none of them are true Miracles, but prestigious Juggles of the Devil".¹⁷¹

More's rejection of the validity of the miracle claims and ceremonial rituals of Islam and Catholicism whilst robustly supporting Anglican Christianity illustrates his confirmation bias¹⁷² and cognitive dissonance resolution. Cognitive dissonance is the uncomfortable experience that occurs when there is a conflict between what we think and what we do, and most commonly resolves in line with our behaviour.¹⁷³ All religions make use of repeated religious rituals, claims and recitals that work as a form of sales and advertising by creating robust memories that the audience starts to believe in and conform to without any evidence, conscious motivation or rationalisation.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, whilst More identified exploitation and superstition in the claims of rival faiths, he was unable to apply the same level of sceptical scrutiny to his own faith.

4.7 Summary Conclusion

There was a broad range of miraculous and supernatural effects that More attributed to the common causal agency of the direct power of God—miracles, prophecy and providence—and he recognised their importance to the success of the Christian religion. From 1660 More became less casual and more precise with his terminology

¹⁷⁰ More, *ME-MI*, II.viii pp. 134-5.

¹⁷¹ More, *ME-SP*, II.xvii p. 435.

¹⁷² See chapter three, p. 125.

¹⁷³ Martha Augoustinos & Iain Walker, *Social Cognition: An Integrated Introduction* (London: Sage Publications, 1995), pp. 22-3.

¹⁷⁴ Barrett, *Why?*, pp. 69-70.

as he attempted to distinguish genuine from ‘false’ miracles. Like other Christian apologists, he struggled in this endeavour.¹⁷⁵ More compared the supernatural wonders of Apollonius of Tyana and the miracles of Jesus, but found no inherent difference in the effects themselves, only in the perceived purpose and the character of the wonder-worker. His theological works emphasised that the age of miracles was past and tackled the perceived idolatry, “false Miracles” and “crafty Figments” of pagans and the Catholic Church.¹⁷⁶

More did not explicitly define what a miracle was, although other contemporaries, including Glanvill, attempted a definition. Essentially, they all returned to Aquinas’s basic definition of divine agency.¹⁷⁷ Hobbes’s simple definition was “*a work of God*” and he insisted that only the Head of the Church could judge whether an alleged miracle was a genuine work of God or not. He argued one could easily misinterpret alleged miracles as supernatural through ignorance of the natural world or deliberate fraud: “the same thing, may be a Miracle to one, and not to another.” Hobbes illustrated his point by referring to the ability of Pharaoh’s magicians to replicate Moses’s miracles, jugglers, “*Ventriloqui*” pretending to be a voice from heaven, conjurers, and also imposters and confederates who could easily fake miraculous healing.¹⁷⁸ This provocative list of fake miracles implicitly challenged the authenticity of accepted biblical miracles by demonstrating how easily one could be deceived.

More’s unquestioning acceptance of biblical miracles and prophecies permitted a diverse range of effects to be of divine origin, from the parting of the Red Sea to obscure apocalyptic visions. His proposal to distinguish true miracles by the beneficent purposes and noble character of the biblical wonder workers lacked internal consistency, with contradictory cases such as the cursed fig tree and the terrifying Old Testament stories of divine vengeance and destruction. His belief in an active Providence and non-divine supernatural agencies complicated matters further. Whilst Hobbes could throw the ‘miracle’ baby out with the ‘supernatural’

¹⁷⁵ See for example, Daston, ‘Marvelous Facts’, pp. 116-7.

¹⁷⁶ More, *GMG*, VIII.viii p. 392; IV.ix-x pp. 120-5; More, *ME-SP*, II.xxii p. 471; More, *AI*, x p. 124.

¹⁷⁷ For example, see Glanvill, *A blow*, xii pp. 81-3.

¹⁷⁸ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xxxvii pp. 233-8. From *AKJV*, Exodus 7-8.

bathwater, More was tangled up in his own web of beliefs. More endeavoured to establish evidence for theological positions within a natural philosophical framework, but objective definitions eluded him, like trying to grasp at smoke. This is an example of the ‘language game’ (‘Sprachspiel’), proposed by the twentieth-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein.¹⁷⁹ In this case, the linguistic terms (‘miracle’, ‘prophecy’, etc) only have clear meanings and relationships to things within their context of use i.e. within the confines of the game (Christian religion). Once outside the ‘game’, where the rules and underlying judgements no longer apply, those meanings rapidly start to unravel.

¹⁷⁹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 4th edition (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), translated by G. E. M Anscombe, P. M. S Hacker, and Joachim Schulte, ‘Part One’.

5 Independence and Immortality of the Incorporeal Soul

5.1 Introduction

More used a significant number of “miraculous and supernaturall effects” as proofs for his arguments against the materialists that spirit was an incorporeal substance distinct from matter; that could exist independent of but could still interact with matter; that pre-existed the body; and that survived after the death of the body (immortality). Materialist philosophers, exemplified by Hobbes, argued that everything was matter and all phenomena were the result of matter in motion. There was either a body, with substance, dimensions and corporeality, or there was not, for example a metaphor, an idea, or the imagination. Thus spirit was “either properly a reall *substance*, or Metaphorically, some extraordinary *ability* or *affection* of the Mind, or of the Body.” Hobbes explained that if spirit (whether the soul, ghost, angel or demon) was incorporeal then it had no substance or dimensions and thus was in no place, it was nowhere; in other words, it did not exist.¹ To counter Hobbes, More chose to respond in an equally ‘rational’ manner.² More was concerned that a world without spirits, angels, ghosts or demons would soon find no room for Christianity or even God. He saw materialism as a gateway to atheism: “that what deads the *Root*, whereby the whole Tree must necessarily wither”.³

Before exploring the related case material, it is important to understand More’s concept of ‘spirit’. More defined spirit as “A *substance penetrable and indiscerpible*”, self-motion or self-activity was a property of spirit but not of body (matter),⁴ and there were different kinds of spirits with distinct properties or qualities. “*God is a Spirit eternal, infinite in essence and goodness, omniscient, omnipotent, and of himself necessarily existent.*”⁵ Thus God was an “*Infinite and Uncreated Spirit*” in comparison to angels, souls of men and beasts and seminal

¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xxxiv pp. 210-4.

² Mintz, *Hunting of Leviathan*, pp. 81-3.

³ More, *ME-MI*, II.viii p. 131.

⁴ More, *IS*, I.iii p. 16; I.vii p. 42-8.

⁵ More, *IS*, I.iv pp. 20-1.

forms “that are *Created* and *Finite*” (i.e. created by God).⁶ Beneath God, the properties of spirits ranged in a hierarchy. At the lowest level of created spirit was the ‘seminal form’ that organised matter into specific types of vegetation. The animal soul had both the vegetative power of the seminal form and the property of sensation (i.e. perceptive faculties).⁷ The idea of animal souls was not universal, but More argued in favour of them in his correspondence with Descartes.⁸ Above the animal souls, the souls of men had both vegetative power, sensation and also reason (a rational soul). Above the souls of men were the angels, that More described as “*A created Spirit indued with Reason, Sensation, and a power of being vitally united with and actuating of a Body of aire or aether onely.*”⁹

More set out three principles that assured the existence of immaterial spirits: first, God, “*an Essence absolutely perfect, cannot possibly be Body, and consequently must be something Incorporeall*”; second that matter was essentially passive whereas spirit was self-active and the source of motion; and third, “*proof of Incorporeall Substances from Apparitions.*”¹⁰ Whilst historians have examined More’s metaphysical and theological philosophy of spirits, as noted in chapter one, few have spent much time examining his “proofs”. This chapter will redress the balance of historical analysis and examine what those cases can reveal about both More’s theories and his belief in ghosts and related phenomena.

5.2 The incorporeal, indiscerpible and self-active soul

Proving the immateriality of spirit was critically important to More because he could not conceive God being formed of base matter with its physical limitations and thus he argued: “*The Existence of God, that is, of a Being both infinitely Wise, Good and Powerful. Which, it is manifest, cannot be Matter or Body, grinde it as thin as you will in your Imagination; and therefore he must be a Spirit, Omnipresent, pervading and penetrating all things.*”¹¹

⁶ More, *IS*, I.v p. 24-5.

⁷ More, *IS*, I.viii pp. 50-2.

⁸ Cohen, ‘Descartes’, pp. 48-61; see also Harrison, ‘Animal Souls’, pp. 520-1, n. 10.

⁹ More, *IS*, I.viii p. 52.

¹⁰ More, *IS*, I.xi p. 75-6 & I.xiii p. 89.

¹¹ More, *GMG*, II.i p. 31.

Hobbes and Descartes had reasoned that the difference between matter and spirit was the property of extension (i.e. dimensions). In contrast, More argued that both matter and spirit were extended, and the key characteristics, or first properties, of matter or corporeal substance were therefore “Divisibility and Impenetrability” in contrast to those of “Spirit or Immateriall Substance”, which were “Penetrability and Indiscerpibility [incapable of being divided].”¹² Unlike inert matter, spirit was also capable of “*Self-motion or Self-activity*”.¹³

More mocked the “unconceivable and ridiculous fancies” of medieval Scholastics with their un-extended spirits and apocryphal disputations about “how many [angels] booted and spur’d may dance on a needles point at once.”¹⁴ He argued against the ‘Holenmarian’ position—the concept that the soul was whole in the whole of the body and also whole in every part of the body [*tota in toto et tota in qualibet parte corporis*]. This was a theory easily ridiculed by materialists and More agreed with Hobbes that it was weak. If the soul was in every part, what happened if a part was severed? Would the soul be entirely present in both parts of the body? More regarded it as a “Scholastick Riddle, which I must confess seems to verge too near to profound Nonsense”.¹⁵ Aristotle had argued for the divisibility of the soul based on his observations of dissecting live scolopendra (a genus of large centipedes), in which both halves of the creature retained independent motion.¹⁶ More’s counter arguments were that the body’s physiological spirits could provide motion for a while until they dissipated and, in any case, scolopendra were imperfect animals (i.e. born of putrefaction and without a soul rather than a divinely created creature). In comparison, More explained that a wasp (a perfect animal) would respond to being cut in two by retaining movement only in one part, “the Soule being still in it, and haply conferring to the direction of the Spirits for motion”.¹⁷

¹² More, *IS*, I.ii pp. 11-2.

¹³ More, *IS*, I.vii p. 43.

¹⁴ More, *IS*, III.ii pp. 341-2.

¹⁵ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xlvi p. 373; More, *IS*, I.x p. 73.

¹⁶ More, *IS*, III.xiv pp. 473-4. From Aristotle, *History of Animals*, translated by D’Arcy Wentworth Thompson, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), IV.vii.

¹⁷ More, *IS*, III.xiv-xv pp. 473-4, 482-4. From Aristotle, *History of Animals*, IV.vii.

More illustrated his metaphysical argument with some case examples. The first concerned an eagle that flew over a barn after it had been beheaded for “quarrelling” with a dog, just as headless pigeons and ducks could sometimes still move. The second case concerned “a Malefactour beheaded at *Antwerp*, whose head when it had given some few jumps into the crowd, and a Dog fell a licking the blood, caught the Dogs eare in its teeth, and held it so fast, that he being frighted ran away with the mans head hanging at his eare”.¹⁸ More sourced both cases from the Belgian theologian and scientist, Libert Froidmont [1587-1653], who had argued in favour of the divisibility of the soul. More counter-argued with Froidmont’s own cases that the soul remained intact and entire in only one part of the body. As the soul was the source of motion in matter, then it must be present where there was activity. Thus in the case of the headless flying eagle, the soul must have remained with the body and wings, whilst the head remained motionless on the ground. In the case of the beheaded man, the head could still make movements but the body remained still. It was impossible for both parts of the divided body to move. More explained that “some men die upwards, and some downwards, that the Soul may, as it happens, sometimes retire into the Head, and sometimes into the Body, in these decollations, according as they are more or less replenisht with Spirits, and by the lusty jumping of this Head, it should seem it was very full of them.”¹⁹

5.3 The pre-existent soul

The pre-existence of the soul was a controversial concept within Christianity, so More cautiously added a disclaimer for *The Præxistency of the Soul*, that he was not claiming pre-existence was true, but rather that it was not “a self-condemned Falsity” and was thus worthy of deliberation by “sober and considerate men.”²⁰ By 1659 More was bolder and asserted “the Hypothesis of Præexistence is more agreeable to Reason then any other Hypothesis” and listed a string of “the renownedst Philosophers” and “Masters of Medicine” that endorsed pre-existence, including Moses, Plato, Pythagoras, Aristotle, Plotinus, Ficino, Cardano, Greek physicians

¹⁸ More, *IS*, III.xiv p. 474. From Libert Froidmont [Libertus Fromondus], *Philosophia Christiana de Anima* (Leuven: 1649), I.iv.iii. [More states xiii rather than iii]

¹⁹ More, *IS*, III.xv pp. 483-4.

²⁰ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 256a. Pagination is erroneous in this section.

Hippocrates of Kos [460-370BCE] and Galen of Pergamon [129-200CE], Persian philosopher Zoraster [second millennium BCE] and Byzantine philosopher Michael Psellus [c.1017-1078CE].²¹ In 1668, he added the endorsements of the Old Testament King Solomon and numerous Church Fathers including Origen.²² However, in 1664 he had to revert to his more circumspect position and reconfirm in his *Apology* how, “all that I averre is the *Rationalness* of this Position, not the *Truth* thereof”.²³

The pre-existence of the soul made sense to More for two main reasons. First, More argued an incorporeal soul could only be created by a miracle and only God could create miracles. To suppose ‘creation on demand’ for the conception or birth of every single baby, was “an Indignity to the Majesty of God, (in making Him the chief assistant and actour in the highest, freest, and most particular way that the Divinity can be conceived to act, in those abominable crimes of Whoredome, Adultery, Incest, [...] by supplying those foul coitions with new created Souls for the purpose:)”.²⁴ Second, if the soul was indivisible (‘indiscerpible’), it was not possible for parts of the parents’ souls to combine to create a new baby’s soul (“ex traduce” or ‘transduction’).²⁵ Physical generation could not ‘create’ a soul; that would produce only flesh and blood. Divine power was required to create a new soul:

“Wherefore who thinks from souls new souls to bring
The same let presse the Sunne beams in his fist
And squeez out drops of light, or strongly wring
The Rainbow, till it die his hands, well prest.”²⁶

Consequently, More proposed that “myriads” of souls were created by God in the beginning as part of the original miracle of Creation. These souls, each an “*Orb of Fire and Aire*”, circled the celestial heavens until the physical generation of their

²¹ More, *IS*, II.xxii p. 237, 251, 247-8.

²² More, *DD-123*, III.xxxi, pp. 502-13.

²³ More, *AHM*, i p. 487.

²⁴ More, *IS*, II.xii pp. 240-1.

²⁵ More, *IS*, II.xii pp. 240-1; see also More, *PP (PS)*, pp. 276-8.

²⁶ More, *PP (PS)*, pp. 276-281, 277.

terrestrial body.²⁷ More explained how the trauma of the soul leaving its aerial home triggered amnesia of all previous experience, just as people could lose their memories following an accident or illness.²⁸ The only case More provided in support of the concept of the pre-existent soul was that of the dream of biblical patriarch, Jacob, concerning angels ascending and descending a ladder between the Earth and Heaven, which More interpreted as “the Descent of Humane Souls [...], and their Return from thence to the Aethereal Regions.”²⁹ More argued that if immaterial spirits, in this case angels, could move freely between heaven and earth, then so too could human souls.

5.4 The travelling soul

To support the doctrine of the immortal soul, More explained “by the testimony of *History* [and...] by *Reason*” how the soul could exist and function separately from the physical body, whether before or during life or after death.³⁰ For the testimony of ‘Reason’, More employed the Neoplatonic metaphysical and theological concept of soul vehicles to explain how the soul functioned, with its perceptive faculties and consciousness intact, whilst outside the body.³¹ The terrestrial vehicle was the mortal body. The aerial vehicle enabled the soul to have independent sense perception, movement and memory. The aetherial vehicle was the astral body and was used by the soul for higher intellectual activities. After death, the perfectly virtuous minority ascend to the celestial regions in the aetherial vehicle; the ‘imperfectly virtuous’ remain in their aerial vehicle in the atmosphere; whilst the wicked are confined in the earth in their aerial vehicles, suffering foetid air, fire, darkness and horror.³² More theorised that “the Soul is never destitute of some *Vehicle* or other”, thus diverging from Plotinus’s claim that the soul aspired to divest itself entirely to be “joined with God and nothing else, nakedly lodged in his arms.”³³

²⁷ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 257a. Pagination is erroneous in this section.

²⁸ More, *IS*, II.xiii pp. 254-5.

²⁹ More, *DD-123*, III.xxxi p. 509. From *AKJV*, Genesis 28:12.

³⁰ More, *IS*, II.xv p. 277.

³¹ More, *IS*, II.xiv p. 258.

³² More, *IS*, II.xiv pp. 257-67; see also Walker, *Decline of Hell*, pp. 135-6.

³³ More, *CC*, ‘The Defence of the Moral Cabbala’, ii p. 222. From Plotinus, *The Six Enneads*, translated by Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page (London: P. L. Warner, 1917, 1930), I.vi.vii.

More often used a female pronoun when referring to the soul and described ‘her’ as an ‘orb’ when outside the body:

“Like naked lamp she is one shining sphear.
And round about has perfect cognoscence
What ere in her Horizon doth appear.
She is one Orb of sense, all eye, all airy ear.”³⁴

The testimony of ‘History’ comprised examples of people who separated their soul from their body, travelled significant distances, and had perception (such as sight and hearing) and consciousness (comprehension), reporting what they had seen (memory) after their souls returned to their bodies. Apollonius ‘saw’ the murder of the Emperor Domitian [died 96 CE] in Rome from Ephesus and had another vision of a burning temple in Rome whilst in Egypt.³⁵ Pythagoras could converse on the same day with his friends whilst they were in distant towns.³⁶ The famous travelling soul of Aristeas was sometimes seen flying in or out of his mouth in the shape of a bird.³⁷ Similarly the soul of the Greek philosopher Hermotimus of Clazomenae [C6th BCE] “would often quit her Body, and wander up and down; and after her return tell many true stories of what she had seen during the time of her disjunction.”³⁸ Finally, a priest in Italy named Cornelius experienced “an Ecstasie” during which he saw the Battle of Pharsalus in Greece between Caesar and Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus [‘Pompey’, 106-48 BCE], “yet could, after his return to himself, punctually declare the Time, Order and Success of the Fight.”³⁹ More argued that these cases demonstrated that the physical organs of eyes and ears were not required for the soul to perceive and sense the world. He therefore assigned the perceptive faculties

³⁴ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 280.

³⁵ More, *GMG*, IV.x pp. 123-4; More, *PP (PS)*, p. 258. Probably from Philostratus, *Apollonius*, V.xxv-xxvi & VIII.xxiii.

³⁶ More, *CC*, ‘The Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’, iii p. 186-7 [(1662+), ‘An Appendix to the Defence of the Philosophick Cabbala’, i p. 101]. From Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras*, pp. 137-8 and Iamblichus, *Life of Pythagoras*, xxviii, p. 65.

³⁷ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 275. Probably from Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651) III.l p. 509 [(1993), p. 629]. More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 277-8. From Herodotus, *Histories*, IV.xiii-xvi and Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VII.iii p. 184. See chapter three, p. 114 in this thesis.

³⁸ More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 277-8 [also More, *PP (PS)*, p. 275]. From Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VII.iii p. 184.

³⁹ More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 277-8. From Ficino, *Theologia Platonica*, XIII.ii pp. 211v. Originally from Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, translated by J. C. Rolfe, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 3 vols., Vol. III, XV.xviii.

[hearing, sight, touch, smell, taste] to the soul vehicle as “the *Centre of Perception*” and concluded that the soul, rather than the body, housed the cognitive functions [e.g. memory].⁴⁰

Surviving the separation of the soul and the body was thus extraordinary, but not impossible. More explained that “neither the *Liberty of Will*, nor *free Imagination*” was sufficient to trigger the separation. Rather, it required extremes of “*Passion*”, meaning an ‘ecstasy’ or trance-like state, because the soul was seated in the heart and thus could “more easily act upon the first Principles of Vital Union”. Such extremes could be dangerous—people had been struck dead instantly from excess joy, fear or grief.⁴¹

“excess of *Desire* [...] has made dying men visit their friends before their departure, at many miles distance, their Bodies still keeping their sick bed; and those that have been well, give a visit to their sick friends, of whose health they have been over-desirous and solicitous. For this *Ecstasie* is really of the *Soul*, and not of the *Blood* or *Animal Spirits*; neither of which have any Sense or Perception in them at all. And therefore [...] a Lad who, through the strength of Imagination and Desire of seeing his Father, fell into an *Ecstasie*; and after he came to himself, confidently affirmed he had seen him, and told infallible circumstances of his being present with him.”⁴²

It is worth noting here that the apparent separation of one’s sense of self or conscious awareness from the physical body is a profound experience, termed an ‘out-of-body experience’ [OBE], with a 9% prevalence in the modern general population. OBEs often include sensations of floating, travelling to distant locations and observing their own body from an external perspective. They are spontaneous phenomena, although

⁴⁰ More, *GMG*, II.iv pp. 36-7 & More, *IS*, III.iv pp. 366, 371 & III.xi p. 436.

⁴¹ More, *IS*, II.xv p. 282.

⁴² More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 283-4. From Jan Baptist van Helmont, *Ortus Medicinae* (Amsterdam, 1652), ‘Supplementum’, xv, ‘De Magnetica vulnerum curatione’, p. 608, [translated by J. C. as *Van Helmont’s works: containing his most excellent philosophy, physick, chirurgery, anatomy* (London: Lodowick Hoyd, 1664), ‘A Treatise of Diseases’, cxii, ‘Of the Magnetick or Attractive Curing of Wounds’, p. 777].

some individuals claim they can enter a dissociative state and induce OBEs at will. OBEs are not indicative of psychopathology, but do correlate with higher levels of dissociation and hypnotic susceptibility, and can be triggered by physical and emotional trauma, meditation, and drug use (especially marijuana and ketamine).⁴³

More considered there were two ways the soul could leave the body. Immaterial spirits could penetrate matter and thus the soul was not “imprisoned and lockt up in so close a Castle [the body]”. The soul could pass through “solid Iron and Marble” and its “Astral Vehicle is of that tenuity, that it self can as easily pass the smallest pores of the Body, as the Light does Glass”.⁴⁴ The second method was for the soul to escape the body through an anatomical orifice, as when Aristeas’s ‘raven’ soul flew in and out of his mouth.⁴⁵ More gave an example from Weyer of a soldier who fell asleep and something shaped like a weasel came out of his mouth and wandered about, “at last coming to a brook side, very busily attempting to get over but not being able, some one of the standers by that saw it, made a bridge for it of his sword which it passed over by, and coming back made use of the same passage, and then entred into the Souldier's mouth again, many looking on: when he waked he told how he dream'd he had gone over an iron Bridge, and other particulars answerable to what the spectatours had seen afore-hand.”⁴⁶ Weyer considered this the work of the Devil, but More considered it to be a “plain example” of the visible form of the man’s wandering soul. More added a popular account from “countrey folk” who reported how the soul could leave and enter the body through the mouth during sleep in the shape of the person or an animal, such as a dove or bee.⁴⁷ The Holy Ghost was often described as appearing like a dove, although that was not the same kind of spirit as a human soul.⁴⁸

More believed that this capacity to separate the soul from the body explained how witches left their homes at night undetected to attend the witches’ sabbat. This

⁴³ Etzel Cardeña and Carlos S. Alvarado, ‘Anomalous Self and Identity Experiences’, in Cardeña et al, eds., *Varieties of Anomalous Experience*, 175-212, pp. 179-92.

⁴⁴ More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 269-70.

⁴⁵ More, *IS*, II.xv p. 270.

⁴⁶ More, *IS*, II.xv p. 278 and More, *AA*, III.viii p. 136 [(1655+), III.xi]. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), I.xiv pp. 40-1 [(1583), pp. 67-8; (1660), p. 38].

⁴⁷ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 274.

⁴⁸ *AKJV*, Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:10-11, Luke 3:22, & John 1:32-33.

absence could remain undetected because the witch's physical body remained in bed. Normally, the bodies of those travelling were insensible to pain; "So senselesse ly that coales laid to their feet \ Nor nips nor whips can make them ope their eye."⁴⁹ More was unsure whether the witches' ointments or demonic spirits helped "loosen the Soul".⁵⁰ Witches were often thought to take animal form and More seemed to prefer the theory that the aerial soul vehicle could adopt whatever form it wished to the theory of physical transformation (discussed in chapter six).⁵¹ More reported that the souls of witches in Norway could supposedly travel for three days, but could not re-enter their own bodies if they had been touched by any living creature during their absence.⁵²

An explanation of how immaterial spirit and physical matter interacted—the mind-body problem—was required to grant the capacity of touch to the soul vehicle. Sometimes the witches brought back tangible evidence, such as a letter or a ring.⁵³ Descartes had proposed that the pineal gland was 'the principal seat of the soul', where the body's animal spirits interfaced with the immaterial soul.⁵⁴ More's vague metaphysical explanation was that the soul and body interacted through the "*Vital Congruity*" of the soul, which "made the *Matter* a congruous Subject for the Soul to reside in, and exercise the functions of life."⁵⁵ He also invented one of his own terms (that didn't seem to catch on) 'hylopathy' [ὑλοπάθεια meaning *matter* + *affection* or *sensitivity*] to denote a "special faculty" of spirit to "*perfectly fill the receptivity of Matter into which it has penetrated, that it is very difficult or impossible for any other Spirit to possess the same, and therefore of becoming hereby so firmly and closely united to a Body, as both to actuate and to be acted upon, to affect and be affected thereby.*"⁵⁶

⁴⁹ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 275; More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 278-85.

⁵⁰ More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 284-5.

⁵¹ More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), 'Appendix', xiii pp. 384-5, More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 278-9, "*I have heard some years ago credibly reported*" in More, 'Advertisement' following Relation VIII, in Glanvill, *ST*, II p. 205; see also Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.vi pp. 122-9. See chapter six, pp. 211-4 in this thesis.

⁵² More, *PP (PS)*, p. 276. Probably from Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651) III.I p. 509 [(1993), p. 629].

⁵³ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 276; More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 284-5.

⁵⁴ Descartes, *Passions*, xxxii pp. 26-7.

⁵⁵ More, *IS*, II.xiv p. 263.

⁵⁶ More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), 'Appendix', iii pp. 311-2. See also a brief reference in More, *EM* (1671) xxviii p. 397, (1995), I.xxviii p. 129.

More provided further evidence for the interaction of spirit and matter in the form of the offspring of pure spirit beings and humans. For example, More reinterpreted the classical gods as spirits or ‘genii’ (essentially angels and demons) and thought it was possible male spirits could impregnate women, as Zeus (Jupiter) fathered Hercules, Perseus and many others. However, he commented that whilst “not impossible, yet it seems to me very incredible” that female spirits could conceive with men and bear demi-god children, as Thetis bore Achilles and Aphrodite (Venus) bore Aeneas.⁵⁷ Similarly he reasoned that female horses could be impregnated by the wind because it made the mares “so full of life and joy, that it will make their Wombes blossome, as I may so say, and after bring forth fruit”.⁵⁸ These beliefs stemmed from More’s misunderstanding of reproduction. He thought that the physical matter of male seed was irrelevant as it contributed “neither Matter nor Form to the *Foetus* it self; but like the Flint and Steel only sets the Tinder on fire, as Dr. *Harvey* expresses it.” Harvey had theorised *ex ovo omnia* (‘everything from the egg’), but his explanation of conception still required the male to be physically present. Harvey described how fertile females “take like *Tinder*, from one single act of *Coition*”. When discussing chickens in particular, Harvey explained that just as a spark starts a fire, so the seed of the male was empowered with “a *plastical virtue*; that is to say, *spiritous*, *operative*, and *proportionable to the subtence of the Stars* [and] with *spirit*, and divine efficacy; and so, that in a moment it can perform its affaires, and convey *fertility*.” More thus made the intellectual leap of presuming that this ‘spirituous substance’ of male ‘geniture’ could travel independently of matter and thus trigger conception.⁵⁹ Most of More’s other examples demonstrating the interaction of soul and body were the plastic power of the soul and the capacity of ghosts to touch the living and interact with their physical surroundings.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ More, *GMG*, III.xviii p. 94. Various accounts, but for example probably from Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, XI p. 298.

⁵⁸ More, *GMG*, III.xviii pp. 95-6. From Virgil, *Georgicks*, translated by Thomas May, (London: Tho. Walkley, 1628), III pp. 86-7; and from Silius Italicus, *Punica*, translated by J. D. Duff, (London: Wiltjam Heinemann Ltd, 1927, 1961), III lines 379-81, pp. 140-3.

⁵⁹ More, *GMG*, III.xviii pp. 95-6. From William Harvey, *Anatomical exercitations* (London: James Young, for Octavian Pulleyn, 1653) xiii p. 75, xxxv pp. 176-80, xl pp. 196-7.

⁶⁰ See chapter seven, pp. 236-41 and chapter five, pp. 172-88 respectively.

5.5 The immortal soul: Resurrection

For the soul to be immortal it had to continue to exist outside the physical body even after death. The immortality of the soul was a key component of Christian doctrine and More noted it was a common or universal notion, a “naturall, hope and expectation of all Nations”.⁶¹ Unlike many of his contemporaries, but typical of Platonists, More believed that because God was the ‘perfect being’, God *had* to be good and omniscient, and thus *had* to create the best possible world (necessitarianism). Therefore God *had* to administer “*Divine Justice*” with reward or punishment in an eternal afterlife. Those who had suffered unjustly during their mortal lives could look forward to a reward of “future Happiness”, whilst those who had inflicted unjust suffering on others yet “died in peace on their beds” would face eternal punishment.⁶² Thus More concluded that the soul *had* to survive the mortal death of the physical body and it was able to do so only because it was pure incorporeal spirit created by God.⁶³

At the End of Days, all the people of the Earth would be resurrected to receive the Last Judgement.⁶⁴ Unlike Lazarus and the other resurrection miracles examined in chapter four, More considered that it was practically impossible for the risen body at the General Resurrection to be literally the exact same body as the deceased one (“*numerical Identity*”). What reward would it be to live for eternity in an old, sick, crippled body? That was an easy target for mocking sceptics and atheists.⁶⁵ Therefore More provided three principal objections against “*numerical Identity*”. Firstly, would the flesh comprising the body of a cannibal be restored to the cannibal or to his victim, whose flesh had fed and merged with the body of the cannibal? Either way, one man would be left “bare of flesh”. Secondly, not all people were buried with their bodies intact. Some were drowned and eaten by fish, some were cremated, and of course the vast majority would have rotted down into “fume and vapours” or been eaten by other creatures. Thirdly, the body grows and regenerates. More explained, “the Bodie is not the same numerical body throughout the whole life

⁶¹ More, *IS*, II.xvii pp. 309-10; see also More, *DS-123*, III.xxi p. 433.

⁶² More, *IS*, II.xviii pp. 318-20. See also for example, Henry, ‘Spirit of Nature’, pp. 62-3; Crocker, ‘Biographical Essay’, pp. 8-9; Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 111-5.

⁶³ More, *IS*, II.xviii p. 314.

⁶⁴ *AKJV*, Acts 24:15; John 5:28-9.

⁶⁵ More, *GMG*, VI.iii p. 221.

of a man, no more then a river is the same river, but that the Bodie wasts and is restored, that the present Spirits, Bloud and Flesh are passing, [...] and new supplies are perpetually made by food”.⁶⁶

More’s alternative explanation was that a person was their soul, and the terrestrial body just a vessel; “the change of the Body causes no more real difference of Personality then the change of cloaths.”⁶⁷ Therefore a new ideal body, intact and free of infirmity and deformity, had to be provided for the souls (the actual ‘persons’) on the Last Day; a body that was “an Heavenly, Aethereal or Immortal body, [...] for the compleating of the happiness of the Souls of the faithfull”.⁶⁸ Thus More’s General Resurrection of souls ascending in new aetherial bodies to the celestial realm under the reign of Christ differed from the general anticipation of a physical second coming of Christ and a literal resurrection of terrestrial bodies on earth.⁶⁹

5.6 The immortal soul: Ghosts

5.6.1 Overview

More’s best evidences for the immortality of the soul were the abundant cases of ghosts. He explained, “if these Stories that are so frequent every where and in all Ages concerning the Ghosts of men appearing be but true, that it is true also that it is their Ghosts, and that therefore the Souls of men subsist and act after they have left these earthly Bodies.”⁷⁰ When referring to the ghosts of dead people, More most commonly used the term ‘apparition’, and to a lesser degree ‘spectre’, ‘spirit’ and ‘ghost’.⁷¹ To avoid any confusion, I will simply use the term ‘ghost’ [derived from Old English *gast* and German *Geist* (spirit)] in reference to the perceived souls of the dead because ‘apparitions’ and ‘spectres’ are broader terms that include some of the

⁶⁶ More, *GMG*, VI.iii p. 222.

⁶⁷ More, *GMG*, VI.iv p. 223.

⁶⁸ More, *GMG*, VI.v p. 226.

⁶⁹ Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 104-6.

⁷⁰ More, *IS*, II.xvi p. 296.

⁷¹ In his Latin works, More used *anima*, *-ae* for ‘soul’, *spectrum*, *-i* for ‘spectre’, *spiritus*, *-us* for ‘spirit’ or ‘ghost’, and *apparitio*, *-is* for ‘apparition’. He seems not to have used *larva*, *-ae* ‘ghost’ or *idolon*, *-i* ‘apparition’. Overall, More used the term ‘phantom’, derived from the Latin *phantasio*, *-are* (to imagine), only once, in the context of ghosts in More, ‘The Easie, True, and Genuine Notion and Consistent Explication of the Nature of a Spirit’, in Glanvill, *ST*, I. xxxiii p. 177.

extraordinary phenomena discussed in chapter four, and ‘spirits’ also includes angels and demons (examined in chapter six).

The Roman Catholic Church had accepted ghosts as evidence for the doctrine of Purgatory. However, the early Protestant reformers abolished the doctrine of Purgatory and maintained that the souls of the dead must go directly to either Heaven or Hell, from whence they could not return. Therefore there could be no ghosts and such apparitions were interpreted as evil and deceptive spirits by orthodox Protestants, such as King James I of England [1566-1625] and Swiss theologian Ludwig Lavater [1527-1586].⁷² Materialist sceptics such as Hobbes took this further and argued that ghosts were either real substantial bodies or delusions, because if ghosts were incorporeal then they were “*no where*”.⁷³ Despite these intellectual reinterpretations, reports of ghostly apparitions prevailed throughout the early modern period amongst all social classes and religious affiliations and these ghosts were most often understood as the souls of dead people.⁷⁴ Some Protestant sceptics accused the Catholic Church of exploiting popular superstitions through tricks and illusions for its greater empowerment and enrichment.⁷⁵ More shared this concern and accused priests of “a very Antichristian piece of Knavery” by dressing up as angels, the Virgin Mary or “wan and ghastly” ghosts, and even supposedly engineering the ‘churchyard crab candle’ ruse.⁷⁶ More complained that “The counterfeiting also of *Apparitions* were a trim way to cut off the belief of there ever having been any true ones.”⁷⁷

⁷² James R. [Stuart], *Daemonologie in forme of a dialogue, divided into three books* (Edinburgh: Robert Waldegrave Printer to the Kings Majestie, 1597), III.i pp. 56-62; Ludwig Lavater, *Of ghostes and spirites walking by nyght*, translated by R. H. (London: Henry Benneyman for Richard Watkyns, 1572), II pp. 98-174.

⁷³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xxxiv p. 211.

⁷⁴ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 704-9; Davies, *Haunted*, pp. 104-16; Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 232-64; P. G. Maxwell-Stuart, *Ghosts: A History of Phantoms, Ghouls & Other Spirits of the Dead* (Stroud: Tempus, 2007), pp. 79-89, 125.

⁷⁵ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 701-4. See for example, Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (London: [Henry Denham for] William Brome, 1584), VII.xv p. 153; William Perkins, *A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft so farre forth as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and manifest by true experience* (Cambridge: Cantrel Ligge, 1610), p. 25.

⁷⁶ See chapter four, pp. 156-7.

⁷⁷ More, *ME-MI*, II.viii p. 134.

However, More's concern for Catholic fraud should not be taken out of context, as perhaps Thomas has,⁷⁸ because More's philosophy of spirit clearly allowed the souls of the dead to return as ghosts, and his belief is evidenced by almost a hundred cases of ghosts. He challenged alternative theories—such as the role of imagination, effluvia from corpses, reflected images, and corporeal demons—and determined they were inadequate to explain all the phenomena.⁷⁹ In contrast, he considered 'hauntings', such as the Drummer of Tedworth and the Devil of Mascon, to be caused by the actions of a demonic spirit.⁸⁰ This section will explore the changing and diverse narrative of the ghost story, and evaluate what these cases tell us about the properties of ghosts, including retained memories and physical touch, that More found invaluable to underpin his metaphysics and theology of the immortal soul.

Ghosts were often instantly recognisable and appeared to people that had known the person in life. In Iceland, Lapland and 'Thule' (a land in the far north that is thought to have referred to Norway or Iceland), it was reported that the ghosts were so lifelike that friends (who did not yet know of the person's death) would greet or embrace them. Cardano had attributed this phenomenon "partly to the *Thickness* of the Aire, and partly to the foule food and gross spirits of the *Islanders*; [...] that their fancies are so strong, as to convert the thick vaporious aire into the compleat shape of their absent and deceased acquaintance". More rejected Cardano's theory—the formation of a spectre by the imagination—to be a "monstrous power". However, he acknowledged that the density ["*Spissitude*"] of the air might have increased the frequency of ghost sightings because it was easier for "the Imagination of the Spirit that actuates its own Vehicle of that gross Aire." Consequently, More suggested the increased thickness and humidity of the air at night-time contributed to the greater frequency of ghost sightings during periods of darkness.⁸¹ It is interesting to note that Iceland's reputation for a higher frequency of ghost encounters persists into the modern day with an above average rate of belief in life after death (78% in 1999-2002 European Values Survey) and high levels of experiences of contact with the

⁷⁸ See Thomas, *Religion*, p. 703.

⁷⁹ More, *EM*, xxvi pp. 335-50.

⁸⁰ See chapter six, pp. 197-202.

⁸¹ More, *IS*, IIxvi pp. 290-1 & More, *PP (PS)*, p. 272. From Girolamo Cardano, [Hieronymi Cardani], *De Subtilitate Libri XXI* (Basel: 1553), XVIII, pp. 952-4, and Grosse, *Magica de Spectris et Apparitionibus*, I.civ pp. 75-6.

dead (38% reported experience of an apparition of a deceased person and 32% reported living in a haunted house in a 2006 Icelandic survey).⁸²

An analysis of the narratives in More's ghost cases shows that the soul often had a motive to return. Surviving ghost stories from the late middle ages often feature deceased members of the knightly class seeking confession and atonement for their sins and alleviation of suffering in Purgatory. As the recording of such stories was undertaken by the very same monasteries that would have been paid by the families to pray for the deceased, this is not surprising.⁸³ However, only one of More's ghost accounts included a confession and this change in emphasis reflected two significant cultural changes. The first was the Reformation, with the rescindment of Purgatory, and the second was the development of a literate and curious laity, who now recorded matters of personal interest for their own purposes, rather than for religious propaganda. The confession case occurred in Ireland, where of course Purgatory remained a current religious concern. A gentleman's butler, sometimes referred to as the 'flying butler' as we shall see shortly, reported he saw several apparitions of people, one of whom he had known previously in life. "I have been dead said the Spectre or Ghost seven years, and you know that I lived a loose life. And ever since have I been hurried up and down in a restless Condition with the Company you saw, and shall be to the day of Judgment."⁸⁴ Although confession declined, a moral purpose usually remained at the core of the early modern ghost narrative. Among More's cases, the reasons for a ghost's appearance were not always reported, but where given they can be grouped into five motives: restoring a legacy gone astray, seeking revenge or justice for murder, giving advice or a warning, seeking a proper burial, or honouring a death pact where family or friends sought to see each other again.

⁸² Erlendur Haraldsson, 'Psychic experiences a third of a century apart: two representative surveys in Iceland with an international comparison', *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 75:2 (2011), 76-90 (especially Tables 2, 3 and 6); Erlendur Haraldsson, 'Representative National Surveys of Psychic Phenomena: Iceland, Great Britain, Sweden, USA and Gallup's Multinational Survey', *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 53 (1985), 145-58, especially pp. 156-7.

⁸³ Andrew Joynes, *Medieval Ghost Stories: An Anthology of Miracles, Marvels and Prodigies* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001, 2006 reprint), p. 5.

⁸⁴ "This story was also sent from Mr. E. Fowler to Dr. H. More, [...] Dr. H. More in a Letter to Mr. Glanvil, affirming that he also heard Mr. Greatrix tell the story at My Lord Conway's at Ragley" 'Relation XVIII' in Glanvill, *ST*, II p. 249.

5.6.2 Restoring a legacy

Sometimes ghosts returned to ensure their legacy was implemented as they intended. In one of four such cases, the ghost of a man from Guildford appeared to his former wife and his brother, who he “greatly frightened”, to recover the inheritance for his son.⁸⁵ In another case from the 1650s, the ghost of the late Mrs Bretton visited her former maid, Alice, who found the ghost’s hand to be “as cold as a Clod.” The ghost marked out a portion of land near Hereford that the deceased had intended for the poor, but her brother had inherited instead. The ghost told Alice a secret which, when relayed to the brother, convinced him that Mrs Bretton must have returned.⁸⁶ In another case, the ghost of James Haddock repeatedly appeared to Francis Taverner near Drumbridge, Ireland, in 1662 until Taverner agreed to speak to Haddock’s former wife and executors to restore a misdirected inheritance. Haddock once awakened Taverner “by something pressing upon him” and his ghost appeared “in many formidable shapes, [and] threatned to tear him in pieces if he did not do it.”⁸⁷ Finally, the apparition of an old woman appeared repeatedly at night in 1663 to cow herder [“neat-herd”] David Hunter of Portmore, Ireland, and asked him to tell her son where to find twenty-eight shillings buried under the hearth. When he did not comply straightaway, she appeared at night and “struck him on the shoulder very hard”, threatening to kill him if he did not deliver her message. After the message was delivered, she reappeared to thank him. “*For now, said she, I shall be at rest, therefore pray you lift me up from the ground, and I will trouble you no more. So David Hunter* lifted her up from the ground, and, as he said, she felt just like a bag of Feathers in his arms. So she vanisht, and he heard most delicate Musick as she went off, over his head; and he never was more troubled.”⁸⁸

In all but one of the cases, the ghost physically touched a living person, and in all the cases only one person could see or hear the apparition. This was also the situation in the ‘flying butler’ case when eyewitnesses, including Greatrakes and the Earl of Orrery, Roger Boyle [1621-1679], who was a soldier and politician and an elder

⁸⁵ “Letter of Dr. *Ezekias Burton* to Dr. *H. More*,” ‘Relation XV’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 235-7.

⁸⁶ “Narrative sent to Dr. *H. More* from Mr. *Edward Fowler*, Prebendary of *Glocester*.” ‘Relation XVI’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 238-42.

⁸⁷ “Letter of *Thomas Alcock* to Dr. *H. More*” ‘Relation XXVI’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 276-84.

⁸⁸ “from the same hand” i.e. “a Letter of *Thomas Alcock* to Dr. *H. More*” ‘Relation XXVII’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 285-8.

brother of More's associate Robert Boyle, saw the afflicted butler lifted off the ground by ghosts or spirits that were only visible to the butler. He "was perceived to rise from the ground, whereupon Mr. *Greatrix* and another lusty Man clapt their Arms over his shoulders, one of them before him, and the other behind, and weighed him down with all their strength. But he was forcibly taken up from them, and they were too weak to keep their hold, and for a considerable time he was carried in the Air to and fro over their heads".⁸⁹

5.6.3 Murder victims

One motive for ghost appearances that spanned eras, countries and religious cultures was the murder victim returning to seek justice or revenge, as immortalised by the ghost of Hamlet's father.⁹⁰ The earliest case was Naboth, who was stoned to death after he was framed as a blasphemer and traitor by Jezebel, the wife of the Old Testament King Ahab, who was then able to confiscate Naboth's vineyard. Subsequently, Naboth's "revengefull soul" offered to be the 'lying spirit' speaking through Ahab's 'prophets' to trick Ahab into taking part in a war where he would be killed.⁹¹ The Spartan general Pausanias [died 470 BCE] accidentally slew Cleonice, his new Byzantine mistress, thinking she was an assassin. Her ghost haunted his dreams until his death.⁹² The ghost stories of other classical murder victims in More's works included: the legendary Remus, murdered by his brother Romulus, the founder of Rome; Julius Caesar assassinated by conspirators in the Senate; the Roman Emperor Caligula [reigned 37–41 CE] assassinated by conspirators in the Praetorian Guard; Julia Agrippina [15-59CE] supposedly assassinated by her son, Roman Emperor Nero [reigned 54-68 CE]; and the Roman Emperor Galba [reigned 68-69 CE] was assassinated by Praetorian guardsmen in the service of Otho [reigned as Roman Emperor for just three months after Galba before committing suicide in 69 CE]. Julius Caesar, Agrippina and Galba specifically haunted their murderers.⁹³

⁸⁹ "from Mr. E. Fowler to Dr. H. More, [...] Dr. H. More in a Letter to Mr. Glanvil, affirming that he also heard Mr. Greatrix tell the story at My Lord Conway's at Ragley" 'Relation XVIII' in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 247-8.

⁹⁰ William Shakespeare, 'Hamlet' in *The Complete Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), I.v pp. 661-3.

⁹¹ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 271 & More, *AHM*, vii p. 530. From *AKJV*, 1 Kings 21-22.

⁹² More, *PP (PS)*, p. 271. Probably from Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, 'Cimon', vi.

⁹³ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 272; More, *IS*, II.xvi p. 288. Probably from Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, 'Caesar', Ixix; Suetonius, *De Vita Caesarum*, 'Caligula', lix & 'Otho', vii.

Ghosts could appear in dreams, such as in a case from the Greek stoic philosopher, Posidonius [c.135-51BCE], which More sourced from Ficino. A man appeared to his fellow traveller in a dream appealing for aid against an attack. The traveller woke and dismissed it but, after falling back to sleep, he dreamed again of his friend. In the second dream his friend was “beseeching him, that though he did not help him alive, yet he would see his Death revenged”, explaining that he had been murdered by a victualler and his body dumped in a dung cart. The traveller awoke and intercepted the cart with the body just before it left through the town gate, enabling justice to be done for his murdered friend. More explained that this was one of “infinite examples [...] of Murders discovered by Dreams”, in which the soul must have survived the death of the body in order to communicate the details of their own murder and obtain justice.⁹⁴

More had two similar seventeenth-century accounts of the ghosts of murder victims. In approximately 1670, the ghost appeared of an old man with his throat and chest cut, matching the appearance and fatal wounds of the recently murdered Mr Bower of Guildford.⁹⁵ In the 1631/2 case of Anne Walker from Lumley, near Durham, her ghost provided sufficient detail for evidence to be found that secured the conviction of her murderers. Whilst working alone at night, a miller called Graime encountered the ghost of a woman with five wounds on her head. She told him her name was Anne Walker and that, after her kinsman Mr. Walker had got her pregnant, he arranged for his associate, Mark Sharp, to murder her on the moor with a pickaxe. Sharp concealed her body in a coal pit and hid the pick and his bloodied clothes nearby. The ghost requested Graime to report the case to a Justice of the Peace and continued to appear to him at night until he did. The body, with the wounds described by Graime, and the weapon and the clothing were discovered in the place she had advised. Walker and Sharp were subsequently convicted for murder at the Durham assizes.⁹⁶ More described the case as “*weighty and convincing*”, arguing that the case demonstrated that after death souls retain self-motion and purpose, are

⁹⁴ More, *IS*, II.xvi pp. 287-8. From Ficino, *Theologia Platonica*, XVI.v pp. 299r-299v.

⁹⁵ “Letter of Dr. *Ezekias Burton*, to Dr. *H. More*” ‘Relation XIV’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 231-4.

⁹⁶ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, pp. 3-11; Webster, *Displaying*, xvi pp. 298-300.

capable of appearing in their own personal form, and have “a keen sense of Justice and Revenge”.⁹⁷

To explain Anne Walker’s case, John Webster asserted, “we cannot ascribe this strange apparition, to any diabolical operation, nor to the Soul of the Woman murdered, so we must conclude that either it was merely wrought by the Divine Power, or by the Astral spirit of the murdered Woman, which last doth seem most rational”. Webster proposed the Paracelsian view of soul (from God), body (of Earth and Water) and ‘Astral Spirit’ (of Fire and Air); the latter “carrieth along with it the thoughts, cogitations, desires and imaginations that were impressed upon the mind at the time of death, with the sensitive faculties of concupiscibility and irascibility.”⁹⁸ More rejected Webster’s interpretation, arguing that his concept of sensitive ‘Astral Spirit’, as distinct from the rational soul, was “monstrous” as it suggested “two Souls in Man”. Instead, More explained that the soul was both rational and sensitive, as is apparent when one considers how Adam was transformed from mere clay to a thinking and sensate living man through God bestowing him a soul with the ‘Breath of Life’.⁹⁹

5.6.4 Advice or warnings

Sometimes ghosts returned to give advice or warnings about the future. More cited three cases in which the spirits of major Greek mythological heroes, Aesculapius, Trophonius and Achilles, appeared to or communicated with the living, with the primary purpose of praising Apollonius of Tyana.¹⁰⁰ Apollonius himself appeared twice as a ghost, once to a sceptical student to convince him of the immortality of the soul,¹⁰¹ and once to Roman Emperor Aurelian (reigned 270-275 CE) to persuade him

⁹⁷ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, pp. 2 & 49. See chapter three, pp. 121-2 in this thesis for More’s corrections to the Walker narrative.

⁹⁸ Webster, *Displaying*, xvi pp. 300 & 312.

⁹⁹ More, *IS*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, II.xvi pp. 383-5 [(1712), p. 143]. From *AKJV*, Genesis 2:7.

¹⁰⁰ More, *GMG*, VI.iv p. 108. From Philostratus, *Apollonius*, I.viii, I.x & VIII.xix. More, *ME-SP*, II.iv p. 359 & More, *IS*, III.v p. 385. From *Apollonius*, IV.xi & IV.xvi.

¹⁰¹ More, *GMG*, V.vii p. 151. From *Apollonius*, VIII.xxxi.

to spare the citizens of his home city of Tyana who had refused to yield immediately to the imperial army.¹⁰²

More considered a ghost appearing in a dream to someone sleeping to be just as valid as appearing to someone who was wide awake. He even described sleep as “a condition fittest for such communications”.¹⁰³ Ibn Zuhr [“Avenzoar Albumaron”] dreamed that a recently deceased friend recommended a medicine for his sore eyes.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the mythological Queen of Egypt, Isis, was reported to appear in Egyptians’ dreams to give remedies.¹⁰⁵ In another case, the Greek poet Simonides of Ceos [c.556-468BCE] came across a dead body washed up on the shore, took pity and buried the body with all due rites. That night, he had a dream in which “the thankfull spright” warned him not to take the voyage he had planned for the next day. Simonides heeded the warning and the ship he was due to sail on was lost at sea with no survivors.¹⁰⁶

5.6.5 Seeking a proper burial

The ghost that advised Simonides was “thankfull” for the proper burial of his body, and the restless spirit, doomed to wander until their body is properly buried, was another common theme of ghost stories across time. One such case was related in a letter from the Roman lawyer, author and magistrate Pliny the Younger [61-112CE], in which he described the Stoic philosopher Athenodorus Cananites [74BCE-7CE] taking on a haunted property in Athens and deliberately staying up all night until the ghost appeared with its rattling chains. The ghost beckoned him and Athenodorus followed it to a certain point, where it disappeared. The next day, Athenodorus ordered that spot to be dug up and a skeleton in chains was discovered. The haunting ceased after the skeleton was “interred with due solemnity.” More described the

¹⁰² More, *GMG*, V.vii p. 151. From Flavius Vopiscus, *Historia Augusta*, translated by David Magie, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932), 3 vols., Vol. III ‘The Deified Aurelian’, xxiv.

¹⁰³ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 271; More, *IS*, II.xvi, pp. 286-8.

¹⁰⁴ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 271; More, *IS*, II.xvi pp. 286-7. From Ficino, *Theologia Platonica*, XVI.v p. 299r.

¹⁰⁵ More, *IS*, II.xvi pp. 286-7. Diodorus Siculus, [‘Diodorus of Sicily’] *The Library of History [Bibliotheca Historica]*, translated by C. H. Oldfather (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1933), 12 vols., Vol. 1, I.xxv.

¹⁰⁶ More, *PP (PS)*, pp. 271-2; More, *IS*, II.xvi p. 288. From Ficino, *Theologia Platonica*, XVI.v p. 299v.

ghost as “freed”.¹⁰⁷ Almost the exact same circumstances were reported by a student studying in Bologna concerning a “walking Skeleton [...] Laden with rattling chains, that showd his grave”, enabling the body to be properly buried.¹⁰⁸ Similarly, More reasoned that ghosts might more easily appear on battlegrounds where their bodies lay, such as the ghostly sounds of battle that continued on the plain at Marathon for four hundred years after the battle between the Greeks and the Persians in 490 BCE.¹⁰⁹

5.6.6 Death pact

Curiosity about the afterlife led some people to make a promise that whoever died first would try to contact the other. These death pacts were an offence because it was thought improper for the living to try to contact the dead.¹¹⁰ According to the Cardinal and ecclesiastical historian Cesare Baronio [1538-1607], Marsilio Ficino supposedly made such a pact with a scholar friend called Michael Mercato after discussing the immortality of the soul. Mercato reported that he heard a horse riding by at speed and “heard the voice of his friend *Ficinus* crying out aloud, *O Michael, Michael, vera, vera sunt illa*. [it is true, those things are true] Whereupon he suddenly opened the window, and espying *Marsilius* on a white Steed, called after him; but he vanisht in his sight. He sent therefore presently to *Florence* to know how *Marsilius* did; and understood that he died about that hour he called at his window, to assure him of his own and other mens Immortalities.”¹¹¹

Understandably, this kind of reunion pact often occurred in families and More reported two endearing cases in which the daughters had married and moved away from home. In the first case, one Mr Watkinson told his daughter, Mrs Mary

¹⁰⁷ More, *IS*, II.xvi pp. 288-9. From Pliny the Younger [Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus], *Letters of Pliny*, trans. by William Melmoth (London: William Heinemann, 1915), Letter 83 – to Sura [Roman Senator Lucius Licinius Sura [died c. 108CE].

¹⁰⁸ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 266. Probably from Antonio de Toquemada, *Jardin de flores curiosas* (1570), translated by Ferdinando Walker as *The Spanish Mandevile of miracles. Or The garden of curious flowers* (London: I. R. for Edmund Matts, 1600), III fol.67v-69v. [This source names the student as Spaniard John Vasquez de Ayola.]

¹⁰⁹ More, *IS*, II.xvi pp. 289-90; More, *PP (PS)*, p. 272. From Pausanias, *Description of Greece*, translated by W. H. S. Jones, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, & London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1918), I.xxxii.iv.

¹¹⁰ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 702.

¹¹¹ More, *IS*, II.xvi, pp. 293-4. From Cesare Baroni, *Annales Ecclesiastici*, (1594) Vol. V, ‘Jesu Christi Annus 411’ [(Lucca, 1740) Vol. VI, p. 631].

Toppam, that “if he should dye, if ever God did permit the dead to see the living, he would see her again.” After Mr Watkinson died, he appeared about six months later to visit his daughter “when she was in bed, but could not sleep, she heard Musick, and the Chamber grew lighter and lighter, and she being broad awake, saw her Father stand at her bedside: Who said, *Mal* did not I tell thee that I would see thee once again?” They talked for a while until he said “he must go, and that he should never see her more till they met in the Kingdom of Heaven. So the Chamber grew darker and darker, and he was gone with Musick. And she said that she did never dream of him nor ever did see any Apparition of him after.”¹¹² In the second case, Dr Farrar, a physician to King Charles II [reigned 1660-1685], entreated his daughter to make a death pact; “that very Night she dyed she opened his Curtains and looked upon him. He had before heard nothing of her illness, but upon this *Apparition* confidently told his Maid, that his Daughter was dead, and two days after received the news.”¹¹³

5.6.7 Malevolent ghosts

So far, most of the ghost cases have been relatively benign—even the skeletons rattling their chains meant no harm—but More did include some unpleasant stories. Ghosts could cause considerable fear. A disembodied spectral hand appeared to the Old Testament King Belshazzar, which terrified him so much that “his urine came from him [and...] made both his knees knock one against another from the violence of his trembling and fear.” As well as this powerful emotional experience, the writing on the wall left by the hand, later interpreted by the prophet Daniel, “was an indubitable testimony, it being permanent and visible to all.”¹¹⁴ More also recounted the story of ‘Eckerken’ that haunted the road at Elten near Embrica [Emmerich] in the Duchy of Cleve, Germany. He described how “there appeared never more then the shape of an *Hand*, but it would beat travellers, pull them off from their horses, and overturn carriages. This could be no *Phansy*, there following so reall *Effects*.” This is one of the cases that straddles the boundary between ghosts and demonic

¹¹² “a Letter of Mrs. *Taylor* of the *Ford* by St. *Neots*, to Dr. *Ezekias Burton* [one of More’s correspondents]” ‘Relation XII’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 228-9.

¹¹³ “Narrative sent from Mr. *Edward Fowler* to Dr. *H. More*” ‘Relation XIII’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 230-1.

¹¹⁴ More, *EPD*, ‘Preface’, pp. xi-xii. From *AKJV*, Daniel 5:5-6.

spirits; More described 'Eckerken' as an "Apparition", implying it was a ghost, but his source Weyer described it as a "dæmon".¹¹⁵

To prevent the restless ghost of a self-murderer (a suicide), it was a legal requirement in England until 1823 to bury the corpse with a stake through the heart.¹¹⁶ Davies notes that the many cases of ghosts of suicides indicate that the stake was not expected to prevent the ghost appearing, but rather to help pin them to a specific location. The bodies of suicides were not permitted to be buried on consecrated ground and were commonly interred in a profane burial under a cross roads on the outside boundary of the settlement. The cross roads made it harder for the ghost to find its way back into town.¹¹⁷ In medieval times, it was more common to throw the bodies of suicides into ditches or rivers.¹¹⁸ These were natural boundaries, and rivers in particular have had a long association with the transition between life and death.

More presented a long compound case of the ghost of an unnamed shoemaker from Breslau in Silesia (now Wroclaw in Poland), that shows some of these common ideas about suicide. The shoemaker had slit his own throat in 1591 but his family concealed the true cause of death "to cover the foulness of the fact, and that no disgrace might come upon his widow". A few weeks later the ghost of the shoemaker repeatedly appeared both night and day, and at night it would "strike, pull, or press, lying heavy upon them". Eventually the townsfolk insisted that the shoemaker's body was disinterred and it was found to be in good condition, "not at all putrid", despite being buried for almost eight months [although this was through the winter from September to April—a possible natural explanation for preservation that More did not mention]. They re-buried the corpse under a gallows, but the ghost continued to appear, now also plaguing his own family such that his widow asked for "more strict proceedings". The shoemaker's corpse was dug up again, and this time

¹¹⁵ More, AA, III.vi p. 123. Also in More, 'A Continuation of the Collection', in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), 'Advertisement' following Relation III, pp. 27-8. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), VI.xv pp. 521 [(1583), pp. 712-3; (1660), pp. 504-5]. See chapter three, p. 112 in this thesis regarding referencing of this case.

¹¹⁶ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 711.

¹¹⁷ Davies, *Haunted*, pp. 51-2.

¹¹⁸ Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Les revenants: les vivants et les morts dans la société médiévale* (1994) translated by Teresa Lavender Fagan, *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society* (London & Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 183-4.

it was beheaded and dismembered, and the heart “which was as fresh and intire as in a calf new killed” was removed. They burnt all the body parts and carefully swept all the ashes into a sack “that none might get them for wicked uses” and tipped them into the river, after which the shoemaker’s ghost was never seen again.¹¹⁹

More referred to the ghost as “he” and used the terms “Spectrum”, “Apparition” and “Ghost”, indicating that he thought the appearances and attacks were conducted by the shoemaker himself in his aerial soul vehicle, rather than a demon impersonating the dead man or the actual corpse animated in some way [i.e. a revenant]. The shoemaker’s unnamed maid died in unspecified circumstances shortly after him and she also reappeared as a malevolent ghost. The maid’s ghost appeared and “lay so heavy” upon a fellow servant that it caused a “great swelling of her eyes”. She also “grievously handled a child in the cradle” but disappeared when the nurse appeared and called out to Jesus. Over the next month the maid’s ghost appeared as a hen that “grew into an immense bigness and presently caught the [other] Maid by the throat and made it swell, so she could neither well eat nor drink of a good while after”. She disturbed others by striking them, pulling their beds about and appearing variously as a woman, a dog, cat and a goat. “But at last her body being digged up and burnt, the Apparition was never seen more.”¹²⁰

This experience of waking up in the night being crushed or suffocated by a malevolent presence is similar to the experiences reported by sufferers of sleep paralysis. Whilst dreaming, the body’s voluntary muscles are usually paralysed to prevent us acting out our dreams. Sometimes, either when falling asleep (hypnagogic state) or waking up (hypnopompic state), individuals can become fully conscious and open their eyes, but be unable to move the rest of their body. Occasionally, breathing remains under the control of the autonomic nervous system creating the sensation of suffocation and pressure or weight on the chest and/or throat. These sensations commonly combine with the intrusion of auditory and/or visual hallucinations from dreaming together with a sense of malicious or evil

¹¹⁹ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.viii, pp. 209-13. From Weinrich, ‘Proaemium’, pp. 1-13.

¹²⁰ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.viii, pp. 213-4. From Weinrich, ‘Proaemium’, pp. 1-13.

presence and terror.¹²¹ Surveys indicate that between 14% and 50% of the population have experienced sleep paralysis at least once in their lifetime and it occurs in all cultures. For example in Newfoundland, it is called the Old Hag (witch) that sits on the chest ('hag ridden' became 'haggard') and in Western Europe since Roman times, the experience had often been interpreted as incubus and succubus demons.¹²² Hufford traces the Old English 'mare' [of 'nightmare'] to the Anglo-Saxon 'to crush', whilst Davies traces the etymology back to the Old Norse 'mara' meaning "a supernatural being, usually female, who lay on people's chests at night, thereby suffocating them".¹²³ The ghosts of Haddock, the shoemaker and his maid all reportedly crushed people in bed at night, as did the ghost of Cuntius in the next case.

The third compound case was that of Johannes Cuntius, an Alderman of Pentsch in Silesia. More explained that Pentsch (or Bentsch) was about four miles from "Jegersdorf" [the former German name for Krnov in Czech Republic].¹²⁴ After his death, the ghost of Cuntius terrorised various townsfolk, causing physical harm to people and animals and attempting to sexually assault women. The parson was "squeezed and pressed when he was asleep [...] this *Spectre* [...] holding him all over so fast that he could not wag a finger". There were other sightings and odd events attributed to him such as milk turning to blood, "great stirs" and "the fallings and throwing of things about".¹²⁵ As trade turned away from the town, the townsfolk decided to dig up Cuntius's corpse. Despite having been interred between 8th February and 20th July, the body of Cuntius was remarkably well preserved compared to others buried at the same time or after him. The corpse had a "tender

¹²¹ Julia Santomauro & Christopher C. French, 'Terror in the night', *The Psychologist*, 22:8 (2009), 672-5.

¹²² Joop T. V. M. De Jong, 'Cultural Variation in the Clinical Presentation of Sleep Paralysis', *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 42:1 (2005), 78-92, pp. 80, 84, 88-9; David J. Hufford, 'Sleep Paralysis as Spiritual Experience' in *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 42:1 (2005), 11-45, pp. 34-7. For a comprehensive list of cultural terms, see Brian A. Sharpless and Karl Doghramji, *Sleep Paralysis: Historical, Psychological and Medical Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 'Appendix A: Terms for Sleep Paralysis', pp. 217-228. See chapter six, p. 210 in this thesis regarding incubus and succubus demons.

¹²³ Hufford, 'Sleep Paralysis', p. 16; Owen Davies, 'The Nightmare Experience, Sleep Paralysis, and Witchcraft Accusations' in *Folklore*, 114:2 (2003), 181-203, pp. 183-4.

¹²⁴ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.ix p. 215 & More, AA, 4th edition in *OO* (1679), III.ix 'Scholia' p. 120 [(1712), p. 166]. From Weinrich, 'Proaemium', pp. 13 & 22. See chapter three, p. 103 in this thesis.

¹²⁵ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.ix pp. 215-24. From Weinrich, 'Proaemium', pp. 13-46.

and florid” complexion, and when a staff was put in its hand “he grasped it with his fingers very fast”. The eyes would open and close by themselves, and blood sprang from the vein when they cut into the leg.¹²⁶ Although Cuntius had supposedly died from an accident, not suicide, the town decided to dismember and burn the corpse and cast the ashes into the river, after which “the *spectre* never more appeared.”¹²⁷

This relationship between the corpse and the ghost was clearly a common folklore belief, but it was neither demanded nor readily explained by More’s concept of the soul. However, in the *Immortality of the Soul*, More briefly summarised the three Silesian cases (the shoemaker, the maid and Cuntius) and suggested that the “*Spissitude*” of their aerial soul vehicles could be thickened and replenished because their own corpses provided “such a *Cambium* [an alimentary humour] or gluish moisture, as will make it far easier to be commanded into a *visible consistence*.”¹²⁸ He also applied this explanation for the “hellish lust” of the Cretian men that returned after death to their marital beds. The laws allowed “that if any Woman was thus infested, the Body of her Husband should be burnt, and his Heart struck through with a stake.” Again More stressed that it was the souls not the physical corpses that made the unwanted visitations. More sourced the Cretian cases from Agrippa, who in contrast seemed to support the revenant or animated corpse theory in his description: “the ghosts [...] were wont to return back into their bodies, and go to their wives, and lie with them”.¹²⁹

In Bohemia [Czech Republic], one Stephanus Hubener reappeared after his death in 1567 and witnesses reported that his “close embraces [...] caused many to fall sick and several to die by the unkinde huggs he gave them.” Again, the burning of Hubener’s body stopped the appearances. More attributed the reason of the dead returning to plague the living as “the pleasing of their own, either ludicrous, or boisterous and domineering, humour.” Again, he resisted the revenant explanation and instead suggested the ghost had had access to “some thickning Matter, such as may be got either from Bodies alive, or lately dead, or as fresh as those that are but

¹²⁶ More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), III.ix p. 225. From Weinrich, ‘Proaemium’, pp. 13-46.

¹²⁷ More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), III.ix pp. 215-26. From Weinrich, ‘Proaemium’, pp. 13-46.

¹²⁸ More, *IS*, II.xvi pp. 291-2.

¹²⁹ More, *PP (PS)*, pp. 269-70; More, *IS*, II.xvi p. 292. From Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651) III.xli p. 483 [(1993), p. 598].

newly dead” and this enabled the ghost to appear “at so cheap a rate”.¹³⁰ Thus More cited these violent physical interactions of ghosts with the living as proof of the soul vehicle concept.¹³¹

These late sixteenth century Eastern European cases of Hubener, Cuntius, the shoemaker and the maid are essentially proto-vampire stories. The term ‘vampire’ only appeared in English in the eighteenth century after a spate of sightings and stakings in Eastern Europe,¹³² and so this cultural phenomenon would have been unknown to More. Paul Barber distinguishes the fictional vampire (aristocratic, pale, slim, and sucks blood from the neck) from the actual folklore reports of vampires (ordinary, ruddy, plump, terrorising the town and attacks by strangling and suffocation).¹³³ In Barber’s collection of early modern cases (which includes the shoemaker) the disinterred corpse of a typical vampire suspect had blood in their mouths, was swollen and dark, seemed not to have decayed as expected, and often appeared to have new skin and longer nails. The body sometimes appeared to bleed, move or make noises when staked. Barber explains that all of these are natural features of decomposition, especially the gases of putrefaction that can make a corpse appear to bleed, move and make noises.¹³⁴ The vampire’s corpse was ‘killed’ thoroughly, by a combination of staking through the chest or mouth, decapitation, dismembering, heart removal, cremation, and disposal in water.¹³⁵ Barber noted that the ‘vampire’ was often a difficult and ill-natured person whilst alive, that they typically died before their time (for example murder or suicide), and thus became a scapegoat for local disease epidemics such as plague.¹³⁶ Vampires were a theological conundrum, not fitting easily into the existing pneumatology of Catholics or Protestants, and often dismissed as fantasy.¹³⁷

¹³⁰ More, *IS*, II.xvi, pp. 292-3. From Grosse, *Magica de Spectris et Apparitionibus*, I.clxxxiv pp. 147-8.

¹³¹ More, *DD-123*, I.xxiii pp. 92-3.

¹³² Paul Barber, *Vampires, Burial and Death*, 2nd edition (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1988, 2010), p. 5; Nick Groom, *The Vampire: A New History* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2018), pp. 23-40.

¹³³ Barber, *Vampires*, pp. 4, 7, 18-9, 24-5, 83-5, 96-7, 120-1, 186-7.

¹³⁴ Barber, *Vampires*, pp. 19, 39-44, 86, 90-130, 161.

¹³⁵ Barber, *Vampires*, pp. 14, 25, 36, 53-4, 61-3, 71-3, 75, 164.

¹³⁶ Barber, *Vampires*, pp. 7-9, 13, 24, 29-30, 34, 57, 78, 121.

¹³⁷ Groom, *Vampire*, pp. 74-88.

In the final case of the malevolent dead, More seemed conflicted between the ghost and revenant explanations. The original account was documented by the Danish historian and theologian, Saxo Grammaticus [c.1150-1220CE], but More probably sourced the case from Agrippa. The story concerns two friends, Asuitus [Aswid in Saxo Grammaticus] and Asmund, who made a death pact vowing that whichever of them still lived, would be entombed with the body of the other. When Asuitus died, Asmund was accordingly entombed with his friend's body. However, the dead body of Asuitus rose up and attacked the mourning Asmund and tried to eat him, inflicting bloody wounds; "His cheek all gore, his ear quite bit away". To stop Asuitus, Asmund had to behead and stake him; "took off his head \ With this same blade, his heart nayl'd to the Cave". More ambiguously described Asuitus as both a "Spright" and a "monster", but in both Saxo Grammaticus and Agrippa it is very clear that this was not an apparition, but a revenant. Agrippa explained, "Sometimes also (which yet is very rare) souls are driven with such a madness that they do enter the bodies not only of the living, but also by a certain hellish power wander into dead Carkasses, and being as it were revived commit horrid wickednesses".¹³⁸

5.7 Summary Conclusion

Whilst few dared to challenge the existence of God or the veracity of the Bible, there was more debate surrounding the nature of the soul. This was not merely a question of materialist atheism versus religious orthodoxy, as More himself held controversial views on soul vehicles, the pre-existence of the soul and the General Resurrection at the Day of Judgement. More used the "numerous and frequent" accounts of the "*appearing of the Ghosts of men after death [...] either by Dreams, or open Vision*" to demonstrate the independent, incorporeal and immortal nature of the soul.¹³⁹ The cases have revealed extraordinary ideas, such as the travelling soul, held by a variety of different cultures across time from the Ancient Greeks and Romans, such as Herodotus and Pliny, to the Norwegian witches and contemporary Neoplatonists,

¹³⁸ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 270. From Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651) III.xl p. 482 [(1993), p. 597]; see also Saxo Grammaticus, *The Danish History*, translated by Oliver Elton (New York: Norroena Society, 1905), Book V.

¹³⁹ More, *IS*, II.xvi p. 286.

such as Ficino. It is interesting that this rare ability for the soul to travel was regarded very distinctly from magical divination. Knowledge of distant events provided evidence that fitted More's theory that the soul could exist and function independently of the body. Early modern ghost cases reflected the social and personal anxieties of those that experienced them,¹⁴⁰ thus the cases demonstrate the fascinating evolution of the ghost narrative reflecting the culture in which they were reported, such as the proto-vampires. Ghost cases provided proof for the survival of the soul after mortal death, including retention of personality, memory, emotion and conscious awareness as evidenced by cases where the ghost had to prove their identity by revealing privately known information. "The Examples I have produced of the *appearing* of the Souls of men after death, considering how clearly I have demonstrated the *separability* of them from the Body, and their capacity of Vital Union with an *aiery Vehicle*, cannot but have their due weight of Argument with them that are unprejudiced."¹⁴¹ The narratives of the ghost cases also reveal what was important to people; i.e. justice, a proper burial, and reunion with loved ones. Many of the reported experiences have similarities with phenomena such as OBEs and sleep paralysis, suggesting a continuity of extraordinary human experience subject to different cultural interpretations. More's metaphysics allowed for souls to physically interact with matter through their soul vehicles, but his philosophical and theological framework struggled to explain elements of foreign cultural folklore such as vampires, reflecting the diversity of beliefs and customs about life after death.

¹⁴⁰ Marshall, *Beliefs*, p. 315; R. C. Finucane, *Appearances of the Dead: A Cultural History of Ghosts* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1984), pp. 150.

¹⁴¹ More, *IS*, II.xvi, p. 294.

6 Nature and Powers of Angels, Demons and Witches

6.1 Introduction

Belief in the reality of the Devil, angels, demons and witchcraft was commonplace across all levels of early modern society. More's beliefs were not unusual, even among natural philosophers and members of the Royal Society.¹ The witchcraft statute of 1604 included capital punishment for causing injury or death by witchcraft, for conjuring spirits or for using dead bodies in witchcraft.² English witchcraft beliefs were heterogeneous, with influences from the fairy magic of folklore to the terrifying Satanic cannibalistic cult of demonology. By the mid-seventeenth century witch reports generally conformed to a diabolic framework featuring the Devil, the pact and the sabbat.³ There was a current of scepticism in England, from scoffing “*Atheistical wits*” to serious authors such as Reginald Scot [1538-1599], Wagstaffe and Webster, who suggested that ‘witches’ were falsely accused, deluded, poisoners or imposters.⁴ However More had keenly read the works of the continental demonologists, particularly Weyer, Remy and Bodin, and he believed the dramatic reports of satanic witchcraft were genuine.⁵

Witchcraft accounts provided details of interactions with, and extraordinary effects caused by, demons. Hobbes and the materialists argued (as with ghosts) that if angels and demons existed, then they must be substantial not incorporeal.⁶ Therefore More sought to defend the spiritual nature of angels and demons in order to protect their miraculous and supernatural biblical roles and their ability to administrate God's providence. More acknowledged these good and degenerate angels, or ‘aerial Genii’, shared the same properties and powers and defined them as a “*created Spirit*

¹ Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 116, 132-3; Crocker, *Henry More*, p. 129; Michael Hunter, ‘The Royal Society and the Decline of Magic’, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, 65:2 (2011), 103-19.

² James Sharpe, *Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England 1550-1750* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), pp. 35-102.

³ Sharpe, *Instruments*, pp. 74-8.

⁴ More, *IS*, ‘The Preface’, sig. bv; Sharpe, *Instruments*, pp. 51, 266-8.

⁵ More, *AA*, III.viii pp. 132-3.

⁶ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, xxxiv pp. 214.

indued with Reason, Sensation” in a vehicle of “*aire or aether*”. His case material was therefore selected to illustrate that aerial genii existed and were immaterial, immortal, self-active, indiscerpible, penetrable and extended.⁷

6.2 Angels and Guardian Genii

Angels, substantiated by about two-hundred and fifty biblical references, survived the Protestant Reformation but lost their role as intercessors. Whilst More argued that angels were superior to men, he also noted that angels refused worship and described themselves as “*fellow-servants*”.⁸ Like most Protestants, More was unconcerned with the medieval hierarchy of angels (seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels and angels), and often used ‘seraphic’ as an equivalent adjective for ‘angelic’.⁹ More most frequently used the term ‘angel’, occasionally used good ‘genius’ or ‘spirit’, and only occasionally used other terms such as ‘archangel’, ‘cherub’, ‘cherubim’ and ‘seraphim’. More’s conviction that angels administered God’s Providence throughout history “to this very age and onwards” was consistent with the contemporary view.¹⁰ It was commonly thought that angelic interactions with men had declined as the Christian gospel became more firmly rooted, but More suspected that it was also because “so very *few men*” were deserving.¹¹ Furthermore, he speculated that men might mistake good spirits for demons; that the “*frailty of humane nature*” might not comprehend the appearance of a good spirit. He also considered the possibility that the angels themselves struggled to hold a visible form—although he more commonly argued that aerial spirits were able to transform their vehicles into whatever appearance they pleased.¹²

Angels appeared in human form in most of More’s biblical cases, such as the “two men clothed in white shining raiments” that spoke to the Apostles as Jesus ascended

⁷ More, *IS*, I.viii p. 52; III.iv p. 371; I.ii pp. 11-2, I.iii p. 17, I.vii p. 43, I.x p. 68.

⁸ More, *ME-MI*, I.ix p. 28. From *AKJV*, Revelation 19:10.

⁹ Alexandra Walsham, ‘Angels and idols in England’s long Reformation’ in Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham, eds., *Angels in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 134-67, pp. 134-5; Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham, ‘Migrations of angels in the early modern world’ in Marshall and Walsham, eds., *Angels*, 1-40, pp. 5, 13-4.

¹⁰ More, *GMG*, V.xvii p. 201; More, *IS*, III.v pp. 385-6; More, *ME-SP*, I.v p. 228.

¹¹ Walsham, ‘Angels and idols’, pp. 136-7; More, *AA*, III.x, p. 140 [(1655+), III.xiii].

¹² More, *AA*, III.xi pp. 146-7 [(1655+), III.xiv].

to Heaven.¹³ Sometimes, angels appeared as a vision of bright light or fire, as did the angel that appeared to Moses in the flames of the burning bush. More explained this implied that the bodies of the higher angels were “*Igneous* and *Lucid* [...] as has more affinity with the benignity of *Light* then with the fierceness and voracity of what we ordinarily call *Fire*”; hence why the flames did not consume the bush itself.¹⁴ The same angel could be experienced quite differently by different witnesses (inspiring some and terrifying others) either by varying its appearance to different people, or due to a variation in “the predisposedness of the persons”. For example, when Daniel encountered the angel on the Hiddekel riverbank, the men with him were “terrified”, experienced “*a great quaking*”, and ran away to hide. Daniel, who had been fasting for three weeks, gave an extraordinary description of the angel—a face like lightning, eyes like lamps of fire and arms and feet the colour of polished brass—and More drew parallels with the similar appearance of the “Son of Man” (interpreted as Christ) in John’s apocalyptic vision.¹⁵ Sometimes angels appeared like the soldiers of God—prepared to fight men to ensure God’s will was done. This began with the “winged men with fiery flaming swords in their hands” that drove Adam and Eve from Eden after their disobedience.¹⁶ More described how God’s “*Army of Spirits*” appeared with “horses and chariots of fire” around the prophet Elisha when the Syrians warred against the Israelites, also with the twenty thousand chariots of God and thousands of angels described in Psalm 68.¹⁷ More declared that “History affords innumerable instances”, such as Pliny the Elder’s report of the Cimbrian War against the Roman Empire in 113–101 BC, of “fightings and skirmishings of whole Armies in the Aire [...] The clattering also of Armour and the sound of the Trumpet have been very frequently heard from the Heavens”.¹⁸

The primary role of angels was as messengers of God [Greek *angelos* meaning ‘messenger’], delivering important news, warnings and prophecies to men on earth.

¹³ More, *GMG*, VI.i p. 213. From *AKJV*, Acts 1:11.

¹⁴ More, *AHM*, i p. 496 & More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’ in Glanvill, *ST*, p. 38. From *AKJV*, Exodus 3:2 & Acts 7:30.

¹⁵ More, *EPD*, ‘Vision V’, pp. 137–41 [verse 7 is misprinted as 9] & More, *AHM*, i p. 496. From *AKJV*, Daniel 10:5–8. See also More, *AARJ*, i p. 6. From *AKJV*, Revelation 1:13–5.

¹⁶ More, *CC*, ‘The Literal Cabbala’, iii p. 21. From *AKJV*, Genesis 3:24.

¹⁷ More, *GMG*, IV.vii p. 114. From *AKJV*, 2 Kings 6:15–18. More, *DD-45*, V.ix p. 282. From *AKJV*, Psalm 68:17.

¹⁸ More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 218. From Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, II.lvii pp. 28.

For example, More noted the Annunciation by the Archangel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, the choir of angels that heralded the birth of Jesus, and the angels that informed Mary Magdalene that Jesus had risen from the dead. More considered that the “significant and decorous” involvement of angels in the otherwise humble life of Jesus endorsed him as “the designed Sovereign of Angels and Men”.¹⁹ The heavenly credentials of angels added gravitas to their messages, and the fulfilment of prophecies proved the divine interaction between men and “*Celestial Inhabitants*”.²⁰ It was angels that revealed the key prophecies of the apocalypse to Daniel and John,²¹ that warned Abraham and Lot about the impending destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah,²² and that advised Abraham he would be the father of a great and blessed nation.²³ Angels could also rescue the faithful, as with the miraculous escape of the Apostles chained up in prison.²⁴

The most notable early modern angel that More reported was the case of Bodin’s unnamed friend, who prayed for a year for a good angel to guide him in his devotional studies.²⁵ Historians consider that Bodin’s ‘friend’ was Bodin himself, because of his depth of detailed understanding concerning the inner religious life of the man.²⁶ There is no indication that More shared that suspicion. Bodin’s ‘friend’ experienced a number of “divine *Dreames* and *Visions*” before a spirit made contact by making knocking noises to wake him at three in the morning every day. Initially concerned the spirit was evil, he became assured of the spirit’s good nature because it struck him on the right ear when he behaved badly or a person with ill-intent approached him, and on the left ear if all was good. This “*Guardian Genius*” also sent the man a dream of horses when his enemies knew his plan to travel by water;

¹⁹ More, *GMG*, IV.ii pp. 101-2. From *AKJV*, Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2:10-14. More, *GMG*, Vii, p. 141. From *AKJV*, Matthew 28:1-8; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-7; John 20:11-13.

More, *DD-45*, V.ix p. 282. From *AKJV*, Psalm 68:17. Choir of angels also reported in More, *DH*, ‘An Hymn Upon the Nativity of Christ’, pp. 495-6.

²⁰ More, *GMG*, V.xvii p. 201.

²¹ More, *GMG*, V.xvii pp. 201-2; More, *ME-SP*, passim; More, *EPD*, passim. From *AKJV*, Daniel 7-12 & Revelation 1-22.

²² More, *GMG*, VI.ii p. 220. From *AKJV*, Genesis 18:2, 18:16-33 & Genesis 19:1-25.

²³ More, *GMG*, VI.xvii p. 200. From *AKJV*, Genesis 18:18.

²⁴ More, *GMG*, V.xi p. 163 & More, *AHM*, i p. 496. From *AKJV*, Acts 5:19 & 12:6-10.

²⁵ More, *AA*, III.x pp. 140-4 [(1655+), III.xiii]. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), I.ii, pp. 59-62 [(1581), pp. 10v-13].

²⁶ F. von Bezold, ‘Jean Bodin als Okkultist und seine Démonomanie’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 105:1 (1910), 1-64, pp. 37-9; Robin Briggs, ‘Dubious messengers: Bodin’s daemon, the spirit world and the Saducees’ in Marshall and Walsham, eds., *Angels*, 168-90, p. 168.

kept him awake one night when he was in peril; and reprimanded him with knocks when he attempted to read an “ill book” or communicate with the spirit.²⁷ His first view of his guardian angel was simply of a round, bright, clear light [an orb], but on another occasion he glimpsed “*a young Boy clad in a white Garment tinctured somewhat with a touch of purple, and of a visage admirably lovely and beautifull to behold.*”²⁸

More did not believe that everyone had a guardian angel, and he considered that it was inappropriate to pray for one in case one attracted a deceitful demon instead. He argued that the safest policy was simply to humbly devote one’s soul to God.²⁹ When Jesch Claes of Amsterdam experienced a spontaneous and “miraculous Cure” of her lame legs in 1676, it followed the appearance of an angelic apparition at night which told her “God Almighty” would restore her. More did not use the term ‘angel’ or ‘genius’, but the description was stereotypically angelic: “Then came light all over the room, and she saw a beautiful Youth about Ten years of Age, with Curled Yellow Hair Clothed in White to the Feet”.³⁰

6.3 The Devil and his Demons

The beautiful nature of early modern angels contrasted sharply with the ugliness and deliberate moral evil that characterised the Devil and his demons. More described the Devil as a “murtherer”, “the old Serpent”, and “*the father of all Lies and Calumnies*”, distinguished by “his *Pride, Cruelty and Malignity of nature*”; his demons had lapsed into a selfish “*Animal life*”.³¹ The Devil and his demons thus personified an inversion of Jesus and the angels—“innocuous love and pure friendship degenerates into the most brutish lust and abominable obscenity”,

²⁷ More, AA, III.x pp. 140-4 [(1655+), III.xiii]. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), I.ii pp. 59-62 [(1581), pp. 10v-13].

²⁸ More, AA, III.x p. 144 [(1655+), III.xiii]. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), I.ii p. 62 [(1581), p. 12v].

²⁹ More, AA, III.xi p. 148-50 [(1655+), III.xiv].

³⁰ “*This account was sent from a Dutch Merchant procured by a Friend for Dr. R. Cudworth*”, ‘Relation XIX’ in Glanvill, *ST*, pp. 251-2.

³¹ More, *DD-45*, IV.xv p. 61, IV.xix, p. 79, IV.xix, p. 80; *DD-123*, III.xvi p. 410; *DD-45*, IV.vi p. 18.

melodious music into “harshness and untunableness”, comely dance into “perverse postures”, and “Angelical *Beauty* [...] into Bestial *Deformity*”.³²

The concept of the Devil in early modern culture was as an ever-present threat, tempter, deceiver and mischief-maker but he also had a role in dispensing providence as punishment for sin as “Gods hang-man”.³³ The Reformation brought Protestants closer and more personal relationships with God and Jesus, but also with the Devil. Luther and Calvin both stressed the immediacy of the Devil as a real and active threat both to body and soul.³⁴ More certainly believed in a real and active Devil and declared “the *Pagans Superstitions* and the *History of Witches* will make good that there are *Devils*”.³⁵

Rather than clearly distinguishing the Devil (Satan) from his subordinate demons, More often used the terms ‘Devils’ and ‘Dæmons’ interchangeably (most often with capitalisation). For example, in one case More referred to “the *Divell*”, whereas in Weyer’s original text it was a “demon” that had described himself as a servant of “the Devil”.³⁶ More sometimes used the Devil’s personal name ‘Satan’, ‘Lucifer’ or ‘Beelzebub’, but most often referred to him by his role i.e. the Devil or the ‘Prince of Darkness’. This predominant use of the term ‘devil’ for both the Satan character and his demons was common in seventeenth century English works, including the Authorised King James Bible, and was the result of the translation from Hebrew to Latin via Greek.³⁷

More concluded that the supernatural effects caused by demons impersonating heathen gods and icons misled pantheistic societies, leading them away from salvation through Judeo-Christian beliefs and vulnerable to corruption and

³² More, *IS*, III.ix pp. 420-2.

³³ Jeffrey Burton Russell, *Mephistopheles: The Devil in the Modern World* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1986, 1990), pp. 36-8; James R., *Daemonologie*, ‘The Preface to the Reader’, sig. 4.

³⁴ Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe*, 4th edition (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 103-5; Russell, *Mephistopheles*, p. 31.

³⁵ More, *GMG*, II.iii p. 35.

³⁶ More, *AA*, III.ix pp. 137-8 [(1655+) III.xii]. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), VI.xiii p. 512 [(1583), pp. 699-700; (1660), p. 495].

³⁷ Brian P. Levack, *The Devil Within: Possession & Exorcism in the Christian West* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013), pp. 52-5, 67-8; Philip C. Almond, *The Devil: A New Biography* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2014), pp. 15-7, 22-3.

domination by the Devil. For example he argued that demons imitated Egyptian Gods by performing oracles and healing.³⁸ More claimed that when the Adranites of Sicily went to war it was demons that caused “the Image of the God *Adranus* [...] to sweat copiously, as also to shake the top of his Spear”.³⁹ Similarly demons made it appear that the Roman statues of “*Juno Moneta*” and “*Fortuna*” could speak and the “*Teraphim*” [idols] of the Gentiles gave answers like oracles.⁴⁰ The tyranny of the Devil persisted in the absence of Christianity, as in “*Madagascar*, where the Devil afflicts them bodily: in *Florida* he astonishes them with dreadful Apparitions, and cuts their very flesh off in his approaches: they of *Guiana* are beat black and blew by him, and the *Brasilians* so grievously tormented, that they are ready to dy for fear upon the very thought of him.”⁴¹ More explained the deplorable pagan practices of ritualised debauchery and child sacrifice as the influence of the Devil, for whom “nothing quenches his thirst but the bloud of men.”⁴²

Whilst the Devil and his demons could manifest themselves in any form, in More’s cases they usually appeared in a uniform mode, being cold to the touch, and sometimes leaving a foul stench behind when they left. More explained that witches reported the Devil to be male, usually black or in black clothes, and sometimes with cloven feet.⁴³ More interpreted folklore spirits, such as elves and fairies, as demonic “little puppet-Spirits”.⁴⁴ He seemed ambivalent about classical fauns and satyrs—sometimes they were of “a middle nature betwixt *Men* and *Beasts*” and other times simply demons.⁴⁵

³⁸ More, *ME-MI*, I.vii p. 21. From Origen, *Contra Celsus*, III.xxxvi in Alexander Roberts & James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: translations of the writings of the fathers down to A.D. 325* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1885, 1989), Vol. 4.

³⁹ More, *ME-MI*, I.vii p. 22. From Plutarch, *Parallel Lives*, ‘Timoleon’, xii.

⁴⁰ More, *ME-MI*, I.vii p. 22. From Valerius Maximus [Valerii Maximi], *Factorum Dictorumque Memorabilium Libri IX* (Amsterdam: 1625), I.viii pp. 29-30; Hermes Trismegistus, ‘The Perfect Sermon (The Asclepius)’ in *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*, translated by G. R. S. Mead (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1906), 3 vols., Vol. 2, II.

⁴¹ More, *GMG*, IV.vi p. 111. Source not identified.

⁴² More, *GMG*, III.xi-xv, especially III.xiv, p. 86.

⁴³ More, *AA*, III.vii p. 128 [(1655+), III.x]. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.iv p. 118 [(1581), p. 85v].

⁴⁴ More, *AA*, III.viii p. 132 [(1655+), III.xi].

⁴⁵ Compare for example: More, *CC*, ‘The Defence of the Moral Cabbala’, iii p. 231; More, *IS*, III.ix p. 422; and, More, *DD-123*, II.xiii p. 250, with: More, *AA*, III.vii pp. 128, 131 [(1655+), III.x]; and, More, *ME-MI*, vi p. 19. More also used ‘satyr’ as a pejorative term for a satirist.

The cold and malodourous features of demons were a consequence of their aerial vehicles, “the bodies of *Divels* being nothing but *coagulated Aire*” while the Devil was the “*Prince of the Aire*”.⁴⁶ Witnesses reported how the hands of demons felt cold to the touch and witches generally reported the “tedious and offensive *coldnesse*” of the Devil during their carnal relations.⁴⁷ More theorised that demons could also “fiercely agitate the single particles” of their vehicles and thus make their bodies “become sindgingly hot”.⁴⁸ Foul smells—reminiscent of the sulphurous lakes of Hell—were often created by demons, and More noted they seemed “to enjoy the nidorous fumes of the Sacrifices” in pagan temples.⁴⁹ Some of Glanvill’s witchcraft relations mentioned how the demons left horrible sulphurous smells behind them when they disappeared, which More took as further evidence that the demons were genuine.⁵⁰ Interestingly, one manifestation of the ghost of Cuntius was preceded by “a most grievous stink” that became “pestilently noysom”, indicating a demonic quality of this particular ‘ghost’. Cuntius appeared with “an exceeding cold breath of so intolerable stinking and malignant a sent, as is beyond all imagination and expression.” The witness experienced “a difficulty of breathing, and with a putrid inflammation of his eyes, so that he could not well use them of a long time after.”⁵¹

6.4 Disturbed and Haunted Houses (Poltergeists)

The phenomena of knockings, unexplained noises, and stones or household objects moving unaided were interpreted by More as disturbances and hauntings by invisible demonic spirits. The term ‘poltergeist’ [German meaning ‘noisy ghost’] did not enter English usage until the nineteenth century.⁵² In early modern Protestant England, these troublesome spirits were most commonly thought to be demonic

⁴⁶ More, AA, III.ix p. 138 [(1655+) III.xii]; More, GMG, VI.ix p. 236. Derived from “the prince of the power of the air” from AKJV, Ephesians 2:2.

⁴⁷ More, AA, III.ix pp. 137-8 [(1655+), III.xii]. From Cardano, *De Rerum Varietate*, XVI.xciii p. 848; From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), VI.xiii p. 512 [(1583), pp. 699-700; (1660), p. 495]; More, AA, III.ix p. 138 [(1655+), III.xii].

⁴⁸ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), ‘Appendix’, xiii pp. 387-9.

⁴⁹ More, ME-MI, I.vii p. 21. From Origen, *Contra Celsus*, VII.v-vi, VII-lxiv.

⁵⁰ More, ‘Advertisement following Relation IV’ in Glanvill, ST, II p. 155.

⁵¹ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.ix pp. 221-2. From Weinrich, ‘Proaemium’, pp. 13-46.

⁵² OED credits novelist Catherine Crowe with the first use of ‘poltergeist’ in English in 1848 and the term was popularised by the psychical researcher Harry Price in the early twentieth century. See Davies, *Haunted*, p. 31 and Harry Price, *Poltergeist: Tales of the Supernatural* (London: Senate, 1945, 1994), p. 2.

spirits—acting independently or on behalf of a witch—rather than spirits of the dead.⁵³ With the decline of belief in witchcraft and demons in the eighteenth century, these disturbances became more readily attributed to spirits of the dead, as in the infamous Cock Lane ghost of 1762. This explanation prevailed until the rise of psychical research in the nineteenth century when a new theory emerged that these phenomena were manifestations of psychical energy.⁵⁴ There were always sceptics, and even early modern narratives often described the thorough investigations in an attempt to eliminate alternative explanations of misperception and fraud.

All of More's cases of disturbed and haunted houses were early modern, with many sourced from eyewitnesses through his network of acquaintances and the rest from other collections of extraordinary events. Haunted or disturbed houses suffered from "leaping lamps and of fierce flying stones". In one case, showers of stones that did not hurt those they struck came inexplicably from the roof of a widow's house in Salamanca, Spain. More attributed this to the "harmlesse mirth" of a "mad spright".⁵⁵ This unreferenced case corresponds to one reported by Spanish author Antonio de Torquemada [c.1507-1569], which also described a fruitless search for a human trickster by a magistrate with twenty men.

In 1662, More added further cases of these phenomena in the third edition of *An Antidote Against Atheism* including a summary of *The Devil of Mascon* (English edition, 1658). More summarised the "many freaks and pranks" of the "unclean spirit" of Mascon ranging from commonplace activities like the pulling of curtains, blankets and bed linen, knockings, and objects being flung about, to unusual activities such as "scoffing and jearing", imitating the voices of others, and "singing prophane and baudy Songs".⁵⁶ The other cases included bricks, pots, stones and linens moving about, a chest cover flapping with "no hand touching it", and windows

⁵³ For example, James R., *Daemonologie*, III.i pp. 56-62; Lavater, *Of ghostes*, II pp. 98-174. See chapter five, p. 174 in this thesis.

⁵⁴ For details of the Cock Lane ghost and subsequent poltergeist phenomena and theories, see Davies, *Haunted*, pp. 81-90, 176-8. See also: "entities [that...] extract energy from living persons" in Price, *Poltergeist*, pp. 4-6; "recurrent spontaneous psychokinesis" in William G. Roll, 'Poltergeists, Electromagnetism and Consciousness', *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, 17:1 (2003), 75-86.

⁵⁵ More, *PP (PS)*, pp. 266-7. Probably from de Toquemada, *Jardin*, pp. 79v-80.

⁵⁶ More, *AA*, 3rd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.iii, pp. 94-5. From Perreaud, *Mascon*, passim [*Boyle Works*, I, pp. 13-39].

struck and jangling as though smashed to pieces “yet all has been found whole in the Morning”.⁵⁷ One set of unreferenced disturbances match the 1658 account by a Mr. G. Clark of a haunted house in Welton near Daventry published in full over twenty years later as Relation XXII in *Saducismus Triumphatus*. The case included “Boxes carefully locked unlocking themselves, and flinging the Flax out of them; Bread tumbling off from a Fourm of its own accord; Womens pattens rising up from the floor, and whirling against people; The breaking of a Combe into two pieces of it self in the window, the pieces also flying in mens faces; The rising up of a Knife also from the same place, being carried with its haft forwards; Stones likewise flung about the house, but not hurting any mans person”.⁵⁸ Relation XXII also detailed the bewitchment of the family’s ten-year old daughter, who vomited gallons of water as well as stones and coals. The situation was resolved when some “long suspected” witches were examined and jailed.⁵⁹ As well as the unseen cause, the lack of harm the flying objects caused to those struck was seen as a supernatural indicator in the Salamanca, Mascon and Welton cases. Richard Baxter also noted this feature when he described a haunted house at Lutterworth in 1646.⁶⁰

1662 was also the year when the infamous Tedworth disturbances began, subsequently investigated and published by Glanvill. In More’s synopsis of the case he summarised the extraordinary knockings and odd noises, and the “wonderful and unusual” events such as the shaking and lifting of beds, tables, chairs, chamber pots, and other items moving about by themselves.⁶¹ More did not mention the suspected witchcraft of the ‘Drummer’, but focussed instead on the observable effects of the “*Dæmon of Tedworth*” and on refuting the accusations of fraud.⁶² More was very curious about the case and had sent Glanvill a list of questions that he answered in

⁵⁷ More, AA, 3rd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.iii p. 93. Source not identified.

⁵⁸ More, AA, 3rd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.iii p. 93; and, “Contained in a Letter of Mr. G. Clark, to Mr. M. T. touching an house haunted in *Welton near Daventry*” [hereafter ‘GC’], ‘Relation XXII’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 263-8.

⁵⁹ GC, ‘Relation XXII’ in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 263-8.

⁶⁰ Baxter, *Certainty*, II.viii p. 42.

⁶¹ More, AA, 4th edition in *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, III.iii pp. 100-1 [AA in *CSPW* (1712), pp. 162-3].

⁶² “*de Daemone Tedworthiensi*” in More, AA, 4th edition in *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, III.iii pp. 100-1 [AA in *CSPW* (1712), pp. 162-3].

his 1668 account of it.⁶³ For further details on the history of the Tedworth narrative, I refer readers to Hunter's thorough analysis.⁶⁴

The implications of such disturbances could be serious, as shown by two cases sourced from *The natural history of Oxford-shire* (1677) by the natural philosopher Robert Plot [1640-1696]. The first described the experiences of Survey commissioners at Woodstock in 1649. At night, stacks of wood, furniture, pewter dishes and trenchers were moved about; men were lifted up by the feet then dropped; there were knocks and "a very great noise, as if forty Pieces of Ordnance had been shot off together." Glass was broken and scattered about, fires and candles were extinguished, curtains torn down and stinking green ditch water poured over their servants. All those involved "were struck with so great horror, that they cried out to one another for help" and one almost killed another with his sword after mistaking him for a spirit. More discussed the case with Dr Thomas Willis [1621-1675] who agreed, "that these Pranks were play'd by Dæmons".⁶⁵ The other case described ominous knockings in 1661, 1664 and 1674 that preceded the deaths of members of Captain Basil Wood's family.⁶⁶ The tapping on windows by magpies or robins was commonly thought to be an omen of death in England and Ireland.⁶⁷

Children and adolescents were often the focal point of these cases, as is reflected in modern theories, whether the psychical theory of adolescent energy and uncontrolled psychokinesis, or the sceptical theory of mischievous teenage attention-seeking behaviour fraudulently creating the effects.⁶⁸ In 1661 a "disturbance" at Mr. J. Newberrie's family house in Maidenhead involved shoes flung over the bed, chairs and other furniture moved about, bedclothes tugged, and odd noises such as knocking, the clattering of shoes and unintelligible whispering around the bed. The

⁶³ Glanvill, *A blow*, 'A Letter to the Reverend and Learned Dr. Henry More, About the Drummer of Tedworth', pp. 137-60.

⁶⁴ Hunter, 'New light', pp. 311-53.

⁶⁵ "A Transcription of a Narrative, out of the Natural History of Oxfordshire", 'Relation I', in More, 'A Continuation of the Collection', in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), II pp. 3-12. From Robert Plot, *The natural history of Oxford-shire, being an essay toward the natural history of England* (Oxford & London: Mr. Moses Pitts and at Mr. S. Millers, 1677), VIII pp. 206-10.

⁶⁶ "Another Transcription out of the forementioned History", 'Relation II', in More, 'A Continuation', in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), II pp. 12-6. From Plot, *Oxford-shire*, VIII pp. 204-6.

⁶⁷ Stephen Wilson, *The Magical Universe: Everyday Ritual and Magic in Pre-Modern Europe* (London: Hambledon and London, 2000, 2004), p. 289.

⁶⁸ Hines, *Pseudoscience*, iii pp. 65-8.

disturbances centred on Newberrie's sister and "a young Maiden Gentlewoman her Bedfellow".⁶⁹ In another case, Alice, the daughter of Lincolnshire yeoman William Medcalfe, endured a strange sickness in 1678 and repeatedly saw a man outside carrying a bloody knife. The house was "haunted or infested by Witchcraft" and at night the interior doors were opened, chairs moved about, clothes and household objects taken, damaged and later returned. One night, Alice's clothes were pulled off and her hair so matted that it took her mother two hours to fix it with scissors. Another night Alice awoke in pain and saw "something like a Cat sitting upon her" but she could not move, which is reminiscent of the sleep paralysis experience discussed earlier.⁷⁰ The disturbances at the home of a Galloway weaver, George Campbell, in the mid-1650s comprised repeated damage and moving about of equipment, materials, bedlinen and clothes. The children were sent away and when the last one, Thomas, returned, the house caught fire.⁷¹

In 1679-80, chairs moved about and odd noises were heard in the house of Sir William York in Lincolnshire. Despite searching, locking doors, and even gathering everyone into one room, they could discover "no Cheat in it" and attributed the cause to "the Freaks of some invisible Dæmon".⁷² More noted that dogs had not barked in this case, just as they had not at Mascon and Tedworth,⁷³ which suggested that the animals were not aware of any strange people or activity.

⁶⁹ "Mr. Andrew Paschall once fellow of Queens Colledge in Cambridge, his Narrative [...] found it by chance in mine own Study [i.e. More's study]", 'Relation XXIV' and More, 'Advertisement' following Relation XXIV, in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 281-9 (p. 289 misprinted as p. 269). See also More, 'An Account', in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), sig. A6-A6v, and see chapter three, p. 122 in this thesis.

⁷⁰ "A true Account... sent from Mr. William Wyche dwelling in the same Parish, to Mr. J. Richardson Fellow of Emanuel Colledge in Cambridge", 'Relation IV' in More, 'A Continuation', in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), II pp. 29-42. See chapter five, pp. 184-5 in this thesis.

⁷¹ "verbatim Transcribed out of the Miscellaneuous Observations of Mr. G. Sinclare, which are added to his Treatise of Hydrostaticks", 'Relation III' and More, 'Advertisement' following Relation III, in More, 'A Continuation', in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), II pp. 16-26. From Sinclair, *Hydrostaticks*, 'An Accompt of Miscellany Observations, Lately made, by the Author of the foregoing Experiments', XX pp. 238-47.

⁷² "sent by the former hand to the same party [i.e. from Mr. William Wyche [...] to Mr. J. Richardson]", Relation V in More, 'A Continuation', in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), II pp. 43-57.

⁷³ More, 'Advertisement' following Relation V in 'A Continuation', in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), II p. 55. More, *AA*, 3rd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.iii pp. 94-5. From Perreaud, *Mascon*, pp. 12-13 [*Boyle Works*, I, p. 25]. See also More, *AA*, 4th edition in *OO* (1679), 'Scholia', III.iii p. 101 [*AA* in *CSPW* (1712), p. 163]. See also Glanvill, Relation I, *ST*, II p. 95.

In one unusual case, the cause of the disturbance was attributed to the restless “Ghost of some deceased party”, rather than a demonic spirit. Mr. Lawrence’s house in London “was miserably disturbed, they being most nights affrighted with Thumpings and loud Knockings at the Chamber-doors, sometimes with a strange whirling noise up and down the Rooms, and clapping upon the Stairs” for about six weeks in 1678 or 1679. The restless ghost confided in an apprentice named Jacob Brent, who ensured the wrong was righted, after which the disturbances ceased.⁷⁴ This case was the exception: generally demonic spirits plagued early modern ‘haunted’ houses rather than ghosts of the dead.

6.5 Possession by Evil Spirits

More’s pneumatology allowed demonic spirits to assault their victims from both inside (possession) and outside (obsession) of the body because they were self-active, independent and incorporeal. As discussed in chapter four, possession had biblical provenance, but Protestants considered occurrences had decreased in frequency because the coming of Christianity had curbed the Devil’s power.⁷⁵ Protestants rejected the Catholic rite of Exorcism as a ‘miracle-on-demand’ regarding any successful cases as Counter-Reformation propaganda based on fraud and ‘false miracles’.⁷⁶ Protestants could only revert to prayer, vigils and fasts, recalling Jesus’s explanation for a particularly recalcitrant possessing demon: “this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting”.⁷⁷

As with demonic disturbance, possession and obsession could be caused directly by the Devil or at the behest of a witch, and was often only distinguished by the suspicion of the victims. Even today there is no consensus on the difference: Thomas suggests that ‘bewitchment’ and ‘possession’ were interchangeable in the early modern period; MacDonald notes 513 cases of witchcraft (mostly ‘strange’

⁷⁴ “a very fresh story [...] from an Eye-witness, [...] as he himself declared or acknowledged, not onely to Dr. *Cudworth*, Mr. *Fowler*, and Mr. *Glanvil*, but very lately to my self also”, More, ‘Advertisement’ following Relation XXIV in *Glanvill, ST*, II pp. 289-92 (pp. 289-92 misprinted as pp. 269-72).

⁷⁵ More, *GMG*, IV.vi, p. 111; Levack, *Devil Within*, pp. 40-2.

⁷⁶ D. P. Walker, *Unclean Spirits: Possession and exorcism in France and England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries* (London, Scolar Press, 1981), pp. 4-6; Levack, *Devil Within*, pp. 23-6; More, *ME-MI*, II.viii p. 134.

⁷⁷ Levack, *Devil Within*, pp. 91-4; Clark, *Thinking*, p. 417; *AKJV*, Matthew 17:21.

physical ailments, but 264 had symptoms of mental disorder), as against 148 haunted or possessed patients among Napier's clients; Sharpe notes that sometimes accusations of witchcraft followed cases of possession; and, Levack clearly separates possession by a demon from the harm by magical means caused by a witch.⁷⁸ Generally, but not consistently, More used the term 'possession' for symptoms of mental torment and extraordinary behaviour and 'bewitchment' for physical torment in the form of extraordinary physiological illnesses.

Clark asserts that possession was "pre-patterned on the basis of cultural expectations".⁷⁹ Levack concurs that fraud and illness account for some early modern cases of possession, but argues that the rest are best explained as an unintentional 'cultural performance' following a 'script' relevant to their religious community (e.g. Protestant or Catholic, laity or convent).⁸⁰ The symptoms of demonic possession varied but could include convulsions, contortions, pain, extraordinary strength, levitation, swelling, vomiting, loss of sight, hearing or speech, fasting, speaking or understanding languages previously not known by the victim, changes in voice, trances, visions, clairvoyance, blasphemy and horror of sacred objects, and immoral behaviour.⁸¹ More argued those "*supernaturall effects which are observed in them that are bewitch'd or possess'd*" were clear evidence that demoniacs were truly afflicted by spirits and not merely ill or fraudulent.⁸² Clark explains that possession was an expression of the expected demonic wrath and fury of Revelation 12:12, as illustrated by the frothing and raving violence of the demoniacs.⁸³ In contrast, More described possession in terms of demonic mischief; "Such wild tricks as these are these deluded Souls made to play, to make sport for those *aerial Goblins* that drive them and actuate them."⁸⁴

More's interest in spirit possession centred on the 'supernatural effects' such as clairvoyance or knowing the unknowable. In one case, a woman spontaneously

⁷⁸ Thomas, *Religion*, p. 570; MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. 198-209; Sharpe, *Instruments*, p. 190; Levack, *Devil Within*, p. 191.

⁷⁹ Clark, *Thinking*, p. 401.

⁸⁰ Levack, *Devil Within*, pp. 23-31, 139-68.

⁸¹ Levack, *Devil Within*, pp. 6-15.

⁸² More, AA, III.iv p. 115.

⁸³ Clark, *Thinking*, pp. 403-5, 409, 414.

⁸⁴ More, *GMG*, IV.vii p. 112; see also More, AA, III.iv p. 116.

acquired knowledge of Virgil's poetry and another could suddenly speak Greek and Latin and also prophesied.⁸⁵ In the well-known case of the 'Witches of Warboys' of 1589-93, a witch sent demons to torment the Throckmorton children with recurrent convulsive fits and knowledge of matters occurring elsewhere in the town and forward into the future.⁸⁶ The abbess Magdalena de la Cruz [1487-1560] of Cordoba in Spain confessed to being a sorceress married to the Devil. Her 'miracles' included her apparent ability to "tell almost at any distance how the affairs of the world went, what consultations or transactions there were in all the nations of Christendome". More claimed that all these supernatural effects were executed by demons⁸⁷

Other supernatural effects included suddenly speaking a language previously unknown to the demoniac, which in More's cases included Greek, Latin and Armenian.⁸⁸ Again, it seems confirmation bias may have precluded More from noticing or remarking on any similarity to the biblical miracle at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit caused the apostles "to speak with other tongues".⁸⁹ It is worth noting in passing that there have been modern cases where people have spontaneously begun to speak in what sounds like a foreign language or accent. Foreign Accent Syndrome is a rare speech disorder involving changes in the pronunciation of words including vowel length and syllable stress. Brain damage (e.g. stroke) is the most common cause, but it is sometimes psychological and episodes can be transient.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ More, AA, III.v p. 122. From Bodin, *De la démonomanie des sorciers* (1593), III.vi, p. 294. See chapter three, p. 120 and note 56 in this thesis. More, PP (PS), p. 273, and More, AA, III.v p. 122. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), III.vi p. 154. Both cases are also in Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), V.xxxix pp. 469-70 [(1583), p. 644; (1660), pp. 453-4].

⁸⁶ More, AA, III.iv pp. 115-6. From Anonymous, *The most strange and admirable discoverie of the three Witches of Warboys* (London: Thomas Man and John Winington, 1593), sigs. E4-E4v, G2v-G3. See also Philip C. Almond, *The Witches of Warboys: An Extraordinary Story of Sorcery, Sadism and Satanic Possession*, (London: I. B. Tauris & Co. Ltd, 2008).

⁸⁷ More, AA, III.iv p. 117-8. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), VI.vi pp. 494-6 [(1583), pp. 673-8; (1660), pp. 476-9].

⁸⁸ More, PP (PS), p. 273 and More, AA, III.v p. 122. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), III.vi, p. 154. More, PP (PS), pp. 273-4. Probably from Michael Psellus, *On the Operation of Daemons [De operatione daemonum]* translated by Marcus Collisson, edited by Stephen Skinner (Singapore: Golden Hoard Press, 2010), p. 73-5.

⁸⁹ AKJV, Acts 2:4.

⁹⁰ Kenneth Asogwa, Carolina Nisenoff, & Jerome Okudo, 'Foreign Accent Syndrome, a Rare Presentation of Schizophrenia in a 34-Year-Old African American Female: A Case Report and Literature Review', *Case Reports in Psychiatry*, 26/01/2016, 1-5, pp. 2-3.

The demonic spirit could also levitate and move a possessed body in unnatural ways that More argued could not be faked. This was especially evident in the three cases from Weyer of possessed nuns at Werts, Hessimont [Netherlands] and Xantes [Germany]. More noted how the nuns were “being flung up from the ground higher then a mans head, and falling down again without harme, swarming upon trees as nimble as Cats, and hanging upon the boughes, having their flesh torne off from their bodyes without any visible hand or instrument”.⁹¹

The possessing demons delighted in compelling their victims to exhibit immoral, indecent, blasphemous and other extreme anti-social behaviour. More had hinted that the nuns experienced “many other mad prankes which is not so fit to name.”⁹² More’s source, Weyer, explained how the nuns also engaged in sexual intercourse, masturbation (“muti peccati” - “the silent sin”), and sexual activity with dogs and cats.⁹³ More tended to shy away from the sexual element of continental demonology, even though his continental sources—Bodin, Weyer and Remy—all dedicated a chapter or two to the subject. This reticence was evident in More’s brief account of a possessed woman who “spoke from betwixt her legs”.⁹⁴ For many female demoniacs, especially for Catholics and particularly for nuns, the inversion of social norms during their possession experiences often included a sexual dimension.⁹⁵

More illustrated the stages of demonic possession on the basis of specific reported experiences of some mid-seventeen century Quakers, thus taking a side-swipe at the self-deluding enthusiasm of radicals. He argued that, whilst the soul was wrestling with the demon for control of the body, demoniacs could experience fits, ecstasies, fainting, swellings, foaming at the mouth, contortions of the body, and that they could see apparitions and hear the demons making “very absurd commands” to beat and starve themselves, “tyrannizing over them all in every thing”. If the demon took control, the behaviour became more extreme and morally outrageous, including “licking the dust, eating of Butterflies”, eating bones and cabbage stalks, not to

⁹¹ More, AA, III.iv p. 117. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991) IV.x pp. 304-7 [(1583), pp. 418-22; (1660), pp. 296-7].

⁹² More, AA, III.iv p. 117.

⁹³ Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991) IV.x pp. 304-7 [(1583), pp. 418-22; (1660), pp. 296-7].

⁹⁴ More, AA, III.v p. 122. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.iii pp. 109-10.

⁹⁵ Levack, *Devil Within*, pp. 175-9.

mention “their fearfull and hideous howlings and cryings, their wild and extatical singings and frantick dancings, their running naked through Towns into Churches and private houses”.⁹⁶ The demon would delight in blasphemy, compelling John Toldervy and James Milner to re-enact Jesus’s martyrdom, and James Nayler to impersonate Jesus’s Palm Sunday arrival in Jerusalem (at Bristol).⁹⁷ John Gilpin (the butterfly eater) realised it was the Devil, not God, possessing him when the spirit encouraged him to cut his own throat.⁹⁸ John Toldervy (the cabbage stalk consumer) thought a fly was a “Messenger from God” and it compelled him to hold his leg so near a fire that the resulting burns took over three months to heal.⁹⁹ Both Toldervy and Gilpin later claimed that they had been possessed by the Devil.¹⁰⁰ Nayler was convicted for blasphemy and later claimed he had been under the influence of wicked spirits.¹⁰¹ Another former Quaker, Robert Churchman from Cambridgeshire, demonstrated a variety of possession symptoms in 1661, including going out of his house naked, quoting passages of scripture that his local minister confirmed he had not previously known, barking like a dog and experiencing urges to kill his relatives.¹⁰²

It might be helpful to consider how these symptoms of demonic possession, such as delusions, hallucinations, disorganised thinking and speech, grossly disorganised or abnormal behaviour and other negative symptoms such as a lack of self-care and personal hygiene, and thoughts of self-harm and suicide, might today be diagnosed as a schizophrenic or psychotic disorder. In particular, brief psychotic disorder is characterised by the sudden onset and duration between one day and one month,

⁹⁶ More, *GMG*, IV.vii pp. 111-2. Probably from John Gilpin, *The Quakers shaken: or, A fire-brand snach'd out of the fire* (London: Simon Waterson, 1653), pp. 3-6, 8-10 & John Toldervy, *The foot out of the snare* (London: J.C. for Tho. Brewster, 1656), pp. 19-20, 24, 27-9, 32, 36-9.

⁹⁷ More, *GMG*, IV.vii p. 112. Probably from John Gilpin, *The Quakers shaken, or, a warning against quaking* (London: S. G. for Simon Waterson, 1655), p. 18 [Milner case]; Toldervy, *The foot*, p. 37; Ralph Farmer, *Sathan inthron'd in his chair of pestilence. Or, Quakerism in its exaltation* (London: Edward Thomas, 1657), sig. A1 and pp. 2-3 [Naylor or ‘Nailer’].

⁹⁸ Gilpin, *A fire-brand*, pp. 3-6, 8-10.

⁹⁹ Toldervy, *The foot*, pp. 19-20, 24, 27-9, 32, 36-9.

¹⁰⁰ More, *GMG*, IV.vii p. 113. Probably from Toldervy, *The foot*, p. 45; Gilpin, *A fire-brand*, p. 9; Gilpin, *A warning*, p. 9.

¹⁰¹ Leo Damrosch, *The Sorrows of the Quaker Jesus: James Nayler and the Puritan Crackdown on the Free Spirit* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 177-229, 205, 255.

¹⁰² “Dr. J. Templar [...] in his Letter to a friend” [hereafter JT], ‘Relation VI’ in More, ‘A Continuation’, in Glanvill, *ST*, 2nd edition (1682), II pp. 58-61, 63-4.

whereas schizophrenia itself normally lasts for at least six months.¹⁰³ Psychosis occurs in 1% of the general population and usually appears in late adolescence or early adulthood, but the cause is not known.¹⁰⁴ Some modern and historical cases of spirit possession resemble manifestations of the controversial dissociative identity disorder, formerly known as multiple personality disorder, with symptoms intensifying and multiplying as more attention is paid to the sufferer by experts (e.g. therapists or exorcists). Modern cross-cultural studies of spirit possession reveal that the characteristics, prevalence and the gender ratio varies greatly between cultures indicating a strong socio-cultural (learned) element derived from shared beliefs.¹⁰⁵

More's cases were representative of early modern demoniacs in that the majority were societal subordinates, such as children and women, or marginals, such as religious radicals. Levack comments that demoniacs did not exploit their "moral immunity" to make any challenge to the status quo, other than to accuse witches.¹⁰⁶ However, they did use this 'moral immunity' to express personal liberty: for example, the celibate nuns expressed their sexuality and religious radicals indulged in blasphemy or indecency. Possession manifested itself in a formulaic manner inverting what was normal, natural, and socially acceptable, and thus confirming the role of cultural expectation.¹⁰⁷ Taking a realist view, Walker rejects the Devil as a valid explanation, arguing, "historians should not ask their readers to accept supernatural phenomena".¹⁰⁸ In response, Clark explains that such an approach is limited because it disregards the differences of cultural models of reality that are fundamental in social history.¹⁰⁹ I think a balance between realism and relativism provides a more rounded and meaningful explanation. Demonic possession served a social function in permitting and explaining deviant behaviour and possible psychotic disorders in a way that was consistent with religious culture; the rituals of exorcism or prayer vigils provided a social device to reintegrate the deviant person

¹⁰³ American Psychological Association, *DSM-5*, II pp. 87-9, 95 & 'Appendix' pp. 801-3.

¹⁰⁴ Gerald C. Davison & John M. Neale, *Abnormal Psychology*, 8th edition (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2001), xi pp. 283-98.

¹⁰⁵ Levack, *Devil Within*, pp. 129-31; Nicholas P. Spanos, *Multiple Identities and False Memories: A Sociocognitive Perspective*, (Washington DC: American Psychological Association, 1996), pp. 145-6, 169-70; American Psychological Association, *DSM-5*, II, p. 292.

¹⁰⁶ Levack, *Devil Within*, p. 190.

¹⁰⁷ Clark, *Thinking*, p. 395, 391, 401; Levack, *Devil Within*, pp. 23-31, 139-68.

¹⁰⁸ Walker, *Unclean Spirits*, p. 15.

¹⁰⁹ Clark, *Thinking*, p. 396.

back into society, whilst also serving as proselytising propaganda for the wider community.¹¹⁰

6.6 Witchcraft

6.6.1 Overview

The early modern Satanic witch myth—the diabolic pact and apostasy, sexual relations with demons, aerial flight, assemblies (‘sabbats’, usually nocturnal) with other witches presided over by the Devil, maleficent magic, and infanticide and/or cannibalism—began to coalesce across Europe during the first half of the fifteenth century and had percolated into English culture by the seventeenth century.¹¹¹ More’s understanding of witchcraft was predominantly based on the continental demonology of Bodin, Remy, and Weyer and his theological and metaphysical views fitted closely with the demonologists’ supposition that the Devil was the agency of the supernatural effects of witchcraft. More had examined several witch suspects detained in Cambridge in 1646 with his friend Cudworth,¹¹² but primarily his interest in witchcraft was academic; he was a metaphysician not a witch-hunter.

6.6.2 Diabolic rituals

The pact was a contract with the Devil that offered the witch access to diabolic power in exchange for body and soul, sometimes symbolised by a little blood. In 1646, John Winnick of Molesworth in Huntingdonshire confessed to making a pact with the Devil, who took the form of a very small bear (and at other times a rabbit and a cat) that drew blood from his cheek. Winnick only asked the demons to recover his lost purse and steal some food, but the pact was sufficient to warrant his execution for witchcraft.¹¹³ The invocation of evil spirits became a felony in the

¹¹⁰ Spanos, *Multiple Identities*, p. 171.

¹¹¹ Robert Muchembled, ‘Satanic Myths and Cultural Reality’ in Bengt Ankarloo & Gustav Henningsen, eds., *Early Modern European Witchcraft: Centres and Peripheries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 139-60; Robin Briggs, *Witches & Neighbours: The Social and Cultural Context of European Witchcraft*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996, 2002), pp. 12-50; Almond, *Devil*, pp. 118-31.

¹¹² More, AA (1653 only), III.vii pp. 128-30. See chapter three, pp. 120-1 in this thesis.

¹¹³ More, AA, III.vi, pp. 125-6. Probably from John Davenport, *The witches of Huntingdon, their examinations and confessions* (London: W. Wilson, for Richard Clutterbuck, 1646), pp. 3-4. I think Davenport was More’s source because some of the phrases are exactly the same and it is the only other record with the specific details such as the examination date of 11th April 1646. For reference to

second English witchcraft statute of 1563, regardless of whether any actual maleficium had taken place or not.¹¹⁴ The Bible demanded death by stoning for those who consulted with familiar spirits.¹¹⁵ In 1650, the Wiltshire witch Anne Bodenham compelled Anne Styles to write a promise in her own blood with her hand guided by a demon's "hand or Claw".¹¹⁶ Blood represented the life essence of a person and was a common element of magical and religious rituals.¹¹⁷ More suggested that the bloody ritual created a more powerful memory, "a stronger Impresse upon the *Phansy*", than a normal verbal or signed agreement.¹¹⁸ The pact bound the witch to the demon, rather than the demon to the witch; the demon was not compelled to execute any supernatural effects requested by the witch. Bodenham's demonic spirits were named "*Belzebub, Tormentor, Satan, and Lucifer*" and appeared in the "likeness of ragged Boys", one transformed into a snake and a dog. A "mark or teat" (for feeding blood to her familiars) was discovered on Bodenham's shoulder and was shown as evidence at the Assizes.¹¹⁹ More noted that both the familiar demon spirits of witches and the demons impersonating pagan 'deities' preferred sacrifices of blood and flesh.¹²⁰

Continental demonologists featured numerous wild accounts of the witches' sabbat—an inversion of a Christian church ceremony—characterised by feasting on rotten food, human flesh and faeces, indecent dancing to bawdy music, trampling on crosses and holy wafers, kissing the Devil on his anus, and diabolic orgies.¹²¹ More noted that if the food presented was edible, it was not always substantial or sustaining, as the hungry guests of the "Nobleman of *Aspremont*" discovered.¹²² More also commented that witches confessed to congregating at night to pay homage to the Devil "in the form of a *Satyr, black Goat*, or else sometimes in the shape of an ill-favoured *black man*", to eat, drink, dance in an "uncouth" manner, and have sex

Winnick's execution at the gallows, see John Stearne, *A Confirmation and Discovery of Witchcraft* (London: William Wilson, 1648), p. 21.

¹¹⁴ Sharpe, *Instruments*, p. 91.

¹¹⁵ *AKJV*, Leviticus 19:31, 20:6, 20:27; Deuteronomy 18:11.

¹¹⁶ More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), III.vii, p. 197. From Bower, *Doctor Lamb Revived*, p. 10.

¹¹⁷ Wilson, *Magical Universe*, p. 425.

¹¹⁸ More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), III.vi pp. 126-7.

¹¹⁹ More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), III.vii pp. 191, 193, 207. From Bower, *Doctor Lamb revived*, pp. 5-6, 28-9.

¹²⁰ More, *IS*, III.iv pp. 370-1.

¹²¹ See for example, Briggs, *Neighbours*, pp. 25-6.

¹²² More, *GMG*, IV.v p. 110. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.iv pp. 117-8 [(1581), p. 85v].

with demons.¹²³ More even speculated that the monstrous races, such as giants (Nephilim) were the offspring of humans and demons.¹²⁴ More rejected the convoluted theory of demons collecting semen from men as succubi to impregnate women as incubi and instead argued that a (male) spirit alone could trigger conception.¹²⁵

6.6.3 Transportation

Demonologists speculated how witches journeyed to and from the sabbat. More examined Remy and Bodin's three theories: the witches' souls separated from their bodies and travelled independently; their bodies were physically transported by demons (sometimes with decoy bodies left in the bed at home); or, the whole experience was impressed directly into the witches' minds by demons. Remy was uncomfortable with the first idea and proposed the other two, whilst Bodin accepted all three explanations as plausible. More professed ambivalence because all three theories were feasible within his metaphysics, but his choice of cases indicated that he preferred the first two.¹²⁶ Besides a witch's confession, there was no form of evidence that could prove the third explanation, but there were ample witnesses who saw witches "Hoyst up into the Air, fly home through clammy shade."¹²⁷ The first theory, separation of the soul, has already been examined in chapter five,¹²⁸ so in this chapter I shall briefly explore the cases of physical transportation. There was only one report in England of witches riding broomsticks and, to be precise, the riders were apparitions of two deceased witches and the Devil.¹²⁹

¹²³ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 267-9; More, *GMG*, III.xviii, p. 95; More, *AA*, III.vii pp. 128-30 [(1655+), III.x]; Anthony Horneck, 'An Account of what happened in the Kingdom of Sweden' in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 322-3.

¹²⁴ More, *GMG*, III.xviii pp. 94-6. From Josephus, *Workes of Josephus*, 'The First Booke of the Most Auncient Historie of the Jewes', I.iv p. 6.

¹²⁵ More, *GMG*, III.xviii pp. 94-6. See chapter five, p. 170 in this thesis.

¹²⁶ More, *AA*, III.viii pp. 132-3 [(1655+), III.xi] & More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), 'Appendix', xiii pp. 396-7. From Remy, *Demonolatry* (2008), I.xiv pp. 51-3 [(1595), pp. 118-20] & Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.iv p. 121 [(1581), IIiv-v pp. 89-94]. The very end of chapter iv and the whole of chapter v were left out of the abridged modern translation.

¹²⁷ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 269.

¹²⁸ See chapter five, pp. 165-70.

¹²⁹ "Narrative sent by Mr. Pool, Octob. 24. 1672. to Mr. Archer of Emanuel Colledge, Nephew to the Judge upon the desire of Dr. Bright [...] Dr. M. did write to Mr. G. touching this story in a Letter dated Dec. 26. 1678" [hereafter 'MP'], 'Relation VIII' in Glanvill, *ST*, II p. 194. See Thomas, *Religion*, p. 529.

To carry the witches, More suggested that demons had “an internal essence and principle that was able to constringe and hold together this fluid body or vehicle of the Spirit, and so make it to sustain the weight.”¹³⁰ In 1533 in Schiltach, Germany, “the Devil [...] carried a Witch into the Aire, and set her on the top of a Chimney”. From there, she upended a pot that set fire to the whole town within an hour.¹³¹ One man used magic flying ointment at the encouragement of his witch wife and “was carried away in the aire to a great *Assembly of Wizards and Witches*”. When the salt arrived for the food, the man inadvertently blessed God and “at that *Name* the whole Assembly disappeared, and the poore man was left alone naked an hundred miles off from home”. More cited three similar cases—one of a thirteen-year old girl, another witch’s husband, and a witch’s son—in which they were physically transported a long distance; however, after they made an exclamation of surprise to God or Jesus, the company of witches disappeared, leaving the speakers alone at night far from home.¹³² More answered critics that it was not necessarily the case that the Devil and the witches were afraid by the mere mention of ‘God’ or ‘Jesus’, or banished by it, but rather that they could not stand it when said with “an honest heart and due devotion”. After all, “it is also evident how burthensome the presence of a truly religious person is to wicked men, especially at that time they have a minde more freely to indulge to their own wickedness.”¹³³

6.6.4 Transformation

Reports of witches transforming into animals abounded and the demonologists proposed several possible explanations: the first was that the human body was physically transformed into an animal shape; the second was that of an apparition of the soul vehicle; the third was that of a demonic illusion; and, the fourth that it was a mere fantasy. More’s metaphysics allowed for all these options and he presented

¹³⁰ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), Appendix, xiii pp. 396-7.

¹³¹ More, IS, III.xvii p. 514. From Cardano, *De Subtilitate*, XIX pp. 969-70. This case is not in the Lyon (1551) edition.

¹³² More, AA, III.vii pp. 127-34 [(1655+), III.x]. More attributed the cases of the witch’s husband and the girl to the Italian judge, Paolo Grillandi [1490-15?], *Tractatus de hereticis et sortilegiis* (1536)]. However, I think it is more likely that More sourced both cases from Bodin (who cited Grillandi) because they are adjacent in Bodin’s text; More did not provide any chapter reference for Grillandi and the other case of a witch’s husband was also from Bodin. The case of the girl was left out of the abridged modern translation. Probably from Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.iv pp. 114-6 [(1581), pp. 81-83v]. The case of the witch’s son was from Remy, *Demonolatry* (2008), I.xiv p. 49-50 [(1595), pp. 114-5].

¹³³ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), ‘Appendix’, xii pp. 381-2.

various cases as ‘evidence’ for each of the first three. He did not promote the fourth explanation in relation to witchcraft, although he did present cases of delusion for other purposes.¹³⁴ Regarding the first, More agreed with Bodin that the human body could be physically transformed by the Devil from the inside, “So that he may soften all the parts of the body besides into what consistency he please, and work it into any form” in a quick, painless and easily reversible process.¹³⁵ More considered the manipulation of matter to be much simpler than the corruption of spirit, asking “what is that *outward mishapement* of *Body* to the *inward deformity* of their *Souls*”.¹³⁶ More’s case evidence included the Ancient Greek mythological sorceress Circe transforming the companions of Ulysses (Odysseus) into swine,¹³⁷ and the sixteenth century “*Were-Wolff*” Peter Bourgot, who recalled “when he look’d upon his hairy feet he was at first affraid of himself.” More noted that the lycanthropes admitted savage attacks on people and livestock after which they found themselves exhausted and sometimes wounded. This evidence convinced him to oppose Weyer, who considered such confessions were “a mere *Delusion* of *Phansy*”, and thus More concluded “they were *really* thus *transformed*”.¹³⁸ Bever compares the similarities between the symptoms caused by specific hallucinogens, such as the sensation of flight or of growing fur, with the experiences reported by the Württemberg witches.¹³⁹ Willem de Blécourt is rightly scathing of some modern suggestions for medical explanations of werewolf phenomena such as hypertrichosis (a rare genetic condition in which hair grows all over the body), porphyria (genetic diseases with a range of symptoms including photosensitivity), feral children and rabies among others. These suggestions more closely fit some specific characteristics from the modern werewolf narrative of film and literature rather than actual cases from historical folklore. De Blécourt also rejects the role of clinical lycanthropy because it is the psychotic delusion of transforming into any non-human animal.¹⁴⁰ However,

¹³⁴ See chapter seven, pp. 231-6.

¹³⁵ More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), ‘Appendix’, xiii, pp. 384-5; see also Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.vi, pp. 122-9 [(1581), pp. 181-200].

¹³⁶ More, AA, III.viii p. 133 [(1655+), III.xi].

¹³⁷ More, AA, III.viii p. 134 [(1655+), III.xi]. From Homer, *The Odyssey*, translated by Walter Shewring, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), X ‘Circe’, pp. 118-9.

¹³⁸ More, AA, III.viii pp. 133 [(1655+), III.xi]; see also Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), VI.iii-xiv pp. 511-9 [(1568), VI.xi-xii, pp. 601-12; (1583), pp. 698-709; (1660), pp. 494-502].

¹³⁹ Bever, *Realities*, pp. 140-50.

¹⁴⁰ Willem de Blécourt, ‘Monstrous Theories: Werewolves and the Abuse of History’, *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*, 2:2 (2013), 188-212.

Charlotte Otten shows that there have been lycanthropes presenting werewolf symptoms throughout history. This suggests to me that lycanthropes must contribute to, or at least reflect, the persistence of the werewolf transformation myth in popular culture.¹⁴¹

More also endorsed the second theory that the soul vehicles of witches could “imitate what shape they please”, although they often resembled wolves and cats.¹⁴² He explained how a ‘Magical Sympathy’ was maintained between the soul vehicle and the body, as exemplified by a case in which a man took “*a Fire-fork*” and struck a large cat that had entered his house in Cambridgeshire. The man thought he had broken the cat’s back, but somehow it vanished. More explained the cat was the “Astral Spirit” of “*an Old Woman, a reputed Witch, [who] was found dead in her Bed that very night, with her Back broken*”.¹⁴³

The third option was that the witch, or the devil on her behalf, could be a “*Praestigiator, an Imposer on the sight*” and create an illusion.¹⁴⁴ More argued this possibility in opposition to Webster’s claim that the Devil could not create such illusions and the reports of transformations must be result of “the imaginative function depraved by the fumes of the melancholick humor”.¹⁴⁵ More explained that when Bodenham transformed “into the shape of a great Cat” the sight of the witness, Styles, “was so imposed upon, that the thing to her seemed to be done, though her eyes were onely deluded. But such a delusion certainly cannot be performed without confederacy with evil Spirits.”¹⁴⁶ More also held demons responsible for two supernatural spectacles concerning the Somerset witch Julian Cox in 1663. When she was seen flying in through her window, More explained this was her “Astral Spirit” or her familiar impersonating her human shape. When she appeared to transform from a hare back into a woman, he argued that there was no “*real*

¹⁴¹ Charlotte F. Otten, *A Lycanthropy Reader: Werewolves in Western Culture* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986), ‘Introduction’ pp. 3-5. For a wider overview of contemporary werewolf beliefs, see pp. 8-15, 51-6, 101-5 and passim for selected readings and case studies.

¹⁴² More, *IS*, II.xv pp. 278-9.

¹⁴³ “*I have heard some years ago credibly reported*” in More, ‘Advertisement’ following Relation VIII, in Glanvill, *ST*, II p. 205.

¹⁴⁴ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, p. 22.

¹⁴⁵ Webster, *Displaying*, v p. 68 & ii p. 33.

¹⁴⁶ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, p. 23. See More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), III.vii p. 196. From Bower, *Doctor Lamb revived*, p. 10.

Metamorphosis of her body”, but rather a demon taking the form of a hare whilst other demons “*hurrying on the body of Julian*” to keep pace and thus “*interposing betwixt that Hare-like Spectre and her body, modifying the Air so that the scene there, to the beholders sight, was as if nothing but Air were there, and a shew of Earth perpetually suited to that where the Hare passed.*”¹⁴⁷

6.6.5 Bewitchment

Although some cases of disturbed houses and possession, such as Tedworth and Warboys, were thought to be caused by witches, when More used the term ‘bewitchment’ it generally referred to some physical ailment, torment or manifestation of foreign objects out of the body. For example, More reported one case as bewitchment although his source, Weyer, presented it as possession. In Amsterdam in 1566 about thirty children experienced fits and convulsions. They reacted strongly to the exorcists’ religious readings and “vomited up *Needles, Thimbles, shreds of Cloth, pieces of Pots, Glasse· Haire*, and other things of the like nature.”¹⁴⁸ Similar cases included one from Cardan, in which a man vomited up pieces of glass, iron, nails and hair, and the child of Mrs Muschamp that vomited “pieces of *Wood with Pinns* stuck in it”.¹⁴⁹

The vomiting of objects appealed to More as a tangible yet supernatural effect of witchcraft. He noted that physicians like Weyer were less likely to be hoodwinked by any fraudulent activity.¹⁵⁰ Weyer had thought it unlikely that some of the larger objects could traverse the oesophagus and thus concluded they must appear in the mouth, or directly in the stomach, “by a prestigious slight of the Devil”. A post mortem of Ulrich Neusesser in Eichstatt [Germany] in 1539 found in his stomach: “a *round piece* of wood of a good length, four *knives*, some even and sharp, others indented like a Saw, with other two rough *pieces of Iron* a span long. There was also

¹⁴⁷ MP, ‘Relation VIII’ and More, ‘Advertisement’ both preceding and following Relation VIII, in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 190-209.

¹⁴⁸ More, AA, III.v p. 121. See Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), IV.viii pp. 301-2 [(1583), pp. 414-5; (1660), pp. 296-7].

¹⁴⁹ More, AA, III.v p. 121. See Cardano, *De Rerum Varietate*, XV.lxxx pp. 728-41, p. 732; Mary Moore, *Wonderfull newes from the north. Or, A true relation of the sad and grievous torments, inflicted upon the bodies of three children of Mr. George Muschamp, late of the county of Northumberland, by witch-craft* (London: T. H., 1650), p. 16.

¹⁵⁰ More, AA, III.v pp. 121-2; More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), ‘Appendix’, xii p. 379.

a *ball of Haire*".¹⁵¹ Whether the objects were diabolically transported into the stomach or the mouth, More was adamant that the phenomena required the supernatural agency of the Devil. Interestingly, there are modern cases of the persistent eating of non-nutritive non-food substances that have resulted in vomiting, internal bleeding and even fatalities. The condition pica can occur in normally developing children, but in adults it occurs more often with other disorders, such as autism, intellectual disability, and schizophrenia.¹⁵²

6.6.6 Necromancy

The only cases of actual necromancy [Greek *nekros* (corpse) + *manteia* (divination)] within More's works were biblical or classical. More described how the witches of Thessaly created a medium, a "vap'rous vehicle for th' intended spright, / With reek of oyl, meal, milk, and such like gear, / Wine, water, hony; Thus souls fitted are / A grosser Carkas for to reassume."¹⁵³ In another case, two men on a mountain summoned spirits through "Stygian rites and hellish mystery", implying the underworld. One man was possessed by a spirit and "From that time he gan know / Many secret things, and could events foreshow."¹⁵⁴ The most prominent of More's necromantic accounts was the Old Testament Witch of Endor. This "woman that hath a familiar spirit" was consulted by King Saul to summon the ghost of Samuel and reveal Saul's fate.¹⁵⁵ Webster claimed the Endor case was a combination of mistranslation and fraud. He argued that the true translation from Hebrew was "a Woman that was Mistriss of *Ob*, the Bottle or Oracle" and that the woman faked the apparition of Samuel using ventriloquism or a confederate to fool Saul.¹⁵⁶ More responded to Webster's "weak and impertinent" argument by explaining that Webster had mistranslated 'Obh' as bottle rather than spirit, and suggested the 'Bottle' had 'Mastered' Webster, who "by guzling had made his wits excessively

¹⁵¹ More, AA, III.v, pp. 119-20. In the text, More attributed the Neusesser case to "Langius" [Johann Lange, 1485-1565, physician to the Elector Palatine] but the 1662 margin note references Weyer, who quoted Lange directly. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), IV.ii-iii, pp. 286-93, IV.ix pp. 302-3 [(1583), pp. 393-403, 415-7; (1660), pp. 281-8, 297-9], from Johann Lange [Joannis Langii], *Medicinalium epistolarum miscellanea* (Basel: 1554), I.xxxviii pp. 138-40.

¹⁵² American Psychological Association, *DSM-5*, II, pp. 329-31.

¹⁵³ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 266. Probably from Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651) III.xlii p. 489 [(1993), p. 605]. Agrippa sourced from Homer, *Odyssey*, X 'Circe', p. 126.

¹⁵⁴ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 274. Probably from Psellus, *Daemons*, p. 71-3.

¹⁵⁵ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 271. From AKJV, 1 Samuel 28:7-20.

¹⁵⁶ Webster, *Displaying*, vi p. 128 & viii pp. 165-6.

muddy and frothy, [that he] could ever stumble upon such a foolish Interpretation?”¹⁵⁷ More elaborated that although Saul’s view had been obscured at first, he did ‘perceive’ Samuel’s ghost and would not have been fooled by anyone, except a demon, pretending to be the prophet he had known so well.¹⁵⁸

6.6.7 Weather magic

Early modern witches were accused of causing storms that damaged crops and sank ships, thus representing an evil inversion of the miracles of Jesus and Moses calming and parting the seas to enable safe passage. More noted Weyer’s argument that the Devil did not cause the storms but knew when they were approaching and “excites the deluded Women to use those *Magick Rites*, that they may be the better perswaded of his power.” Weyer ridiculed the nature of the rites as mundane and clearly powerless: “*casting of Flint-Stones behind their backs towards the West, or flinging a little Sand in the Aire, or striking a River with a Broom, and so sprinkling the Wet of it toward Heaven, the stirring of Urine or Water with their finger in a Hole in the ground, or boyling of Hogs Bristles in a Pot*”.¹⁵⁹ In contrast, Remy’s judicial experience of over two hundred witches impressed More with the possibility that magical rites prompted the demons to cause the storms.¹⁶⁰ In one case the witch created a thunderstorm on request that only affected the specific place nominated. In another, a daughter raised a raincloud that only discharged on her father’s drought-ridden field.¹⁶¹ Three other cases contained accounts of storms summoned by witches that also carried the witch or the witnesses through the air, leaving some at the top of tall trees.¹⁶²

Bodin, who accepted both Weyer’s and Remy’s theories as credible, concluded that extremely localised or bizarre weather must have been caused by demons on behalf

¹⁵⁷ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, p. 30.

¹⁵⁸ More, ‘Dr. H. M. his Letter’, in Glanvill, *ST*, pp. 44-7, 49, 54.

¹⁵⁹ More, *AA*, III.iii pp. 111-2. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), III.xvi pp. 214-5 [(1568), pp. 262-3; (1583), pp. 297-9; (1660), pp. 210-1). Weyer’s list of weather magic rites also included setting wooden beams or logs crosswise on a river bank that was not listed by More.

¹⁶⁰ More, *AA*, III.iii pp. 112-3. From Remy, *Demonolatry* (2008), I.xxv pp. 74-5 [(1595), pp. 158-62].

¹⁶¹ More, *AA*, III.iii p. 113. From Remy, *Demonolatry* (2008), I.xxv pp. 74-5 [(1595), pp. 160-1], originally from Kramer & Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum* (2006), II.i.xv pp. 383-5 or III.xvi p. 559, and II.i.xiii, pp. 374-5. See chapter three, pp. 114-5 in this thesis.

¹⁶² More, *AA*, III.iii pp. 113-5. From Remy, *Demonolatry* (2008), I.xix pp. 84-5 [(1595), pp. 179-82].

of the witches.¹⁶³ In one case, a witch in Constance [Konstanz] took revenge after not receiving an invitation to a village wedding and caused a hailstorm to disrupt the dancing and merrymaking.¹⁶⁴ More also reported how the witches of Lapland sold ‘winds’ to merchants in the form of a knotted rope. The loosening of the first knot would provide a fair wind, the second a much stronger one, and the dangerous “*Third knot*” would unleash a furious tempest.¹⁶⁵ There were also two cases of “preternatural winds”, the first nearly knocking over the gallows when a condemned witch denounced the Devil, and the second shaking the house when Bodenham summoned her demon spirits.¹⁶⁶ More’s considered conclusion was that ultimately supernatural storms originated from the power and foresight of the Devil, who ruled the “Kingdome of the *Aire*”, rather than from the witch or her spells per se.¹⁶⁷

6.6.8 Moral magic

More indirectly acknowledged that magic could be used for good purposes. He commented that Bodin and others had witnessed successful coscinomancy [Ancient Greek *koskinon* (a sieve) + *manteia* (divination)], which was a common method across Europe for identifying thieves using a sieve and shears.¹⁶⁸ The sceptic Scot proposed that the apparent independent movement could be caused by the “slight of the fingers” or “the imagination”.¹⁶⁹ Similar effects are found with Ouija boards and dowsing, which in modern trials have been shown to be caused by unconscious muscular movements driven by beliefs and expectations (known as the ideomotor effect) and results are no better than chance.¹⁷⁰

Early modern culture had a separate role for cunning folk (white witches and wizards). This is corroborated by Macfarlane’s study of Essex records in which there

¹⁶³ Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.viii pp. 135-7 [(1580), pp. 109-112v].

¹⁶⁴ More, AA, III.iii p. 115. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.viii pp. 135-7 [(1580), pp. 109-112v]. Not recognised by More, but Bodin sourced this case from Kramer & Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum* (2006), II.i.iii, p. 299.

¹⁶⁵ More, AA, III.ii p. 111. From Magnus, *Compendious History*, III.xv p. 47. See Appendix Figure 3 for an illustration.

¹⁶⁶ “a true story W^{ch} I heard from an eye-witnesse” More, AA, III.iii p. 111; More, AA, 2nd edition (1655), III.vii pp. 191. From Bower, *Doctor Lamb revived*, p. 5.

¹⁶⁷ More, AA, III.iii p. 112.

¹⁶⁸ More, AA, III.ii p. 109. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), II.i, p. 97 [(1581), p. 54v-55]. See also Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 253-4.

¹⁶⁹ Scot, *Discoverie*, XII-xvii pp. 262-3.

¹⁷⁰ French & Stone, *Anomalistic Psychology*, pp. 264-6. See also Bever, *Realities*, pp. 224-6.

were less than six cunning folk in a sample of over 400 witches, and of 41 known cunning folk, only four were accused of ‘black’ witchcraft.¹⁷¹ More did not use the term ‘cunning folk’, and only once referred to a ‘white witch’—the Scottish witch Agnes Sampson accused of raising storms against King James in 1590. More noted how Sampson used her ‘magic’—in the form of prayers and Christianised rhymes—for healing and predictions such that she almost seemed to be “an holy woman.”¹⁷² The abbess Magdalena de la Cruz did no harm but used her power to gain knowledge of distant events, receive the Eucharist wafer, levitate, increase and decrease her hair length, and appear in the chapel for prayers whilst she was locked in a cell.¹⁷³ As More judged Jesus and Apollonius on the moral purpose of their ‘miracles’,¹⁷⁴ perhaps that moral principle inclined him to sympathise with these two ‘witches’. More noted how Bodenham was renowned for foretelling the future, helping others recover stolen goods and curing diseases with her magic. Bodenham said her “*Book of Charms*” was “worth thousands of other books”. She claimed “there was no hurt in these Spirits, but they would do a man all good offices, attending upon him and garding him from evil all his life long.”¹⁷⁵

A common early modern counter-magical practice was the ‘witch-bottle’. A bottle was filled with hair, nail clippings and urine (a simulacrum of the victim) and also iron nails or pins to fix and trap the evil spirit of the witch or demon inside the bottle. Witch-bottles were buried at the threshold to the home (doorway, window ledge, hearth or chimney) to capture the malignant spirit as it entered.¹⁷⁶ More noted when they attempted to capture the Devil of Mascon in a bottle it “fell a laughing” that they should think him foolish enough to go in and risk being trapped.¹⁷⁷ More also described one case in which a Suffolk man filled a bottle with pins, needles and nails together with some of his wife’s urine and buried it, after which his bewitched wife

¹⁷¹ Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 1970, 1999), p. 128.

¹⁷² More, ‘Advertisement’ following Relation XXVIII, Glanvill, *ST*, II p. 303.

¹⁷³ More, *AA*, III.iv, p. 117-8. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), VI.vi pp. 494-6 [(1583), p. 673-8; (1660), p. 476-9]. See chapter six, p. 204 in this thesis.

¹⁷⁴ See chapter four, p. 138.

¹⁷⁵ More, *AA*, 2nd edition (1655), III.vii pp. 190, 205-7. From Bower, *Doctor Lamb revived*, pp. 21, 25-6, 32.

¹⁷⁶ Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 648-9. For example see ‘The Holywell witch-bottle’, Museum of London Archaeology Service, [www.mola.org.uk/blog/holywell-witch-bottle, last accessed 13th August 2017].

¹⁷⁷ More, *AA*, 3rd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.iii p. 95. From Perreaud, *Mascon*, p. 17 [*Boyle Works*, I, p. 26].

recovered her health. Subsequently, a ‘wizard’ confessed on his death-bed to bewitching the woman, and claimed that this “Counter-practice” had killed him.¹⁷⁸

Ultimately, the Devil was perceived to be an evil trickster and both witch and client were often betrayed by his capricious nature. The horse of More’s friend had ailed until cured by a farrier who “dealt in Charms, or Spells” and branded its hindquarters with an “S”. More’s friend believed the “S” stood for “Satan” and reprimanded his servants, after which the horse became ill again until it was sold.¹⁷⁹ A man in Salzburg used a charm to get all the snakes into a ditch and killed them except one large snake that leapt out and killed him.¹⁸⁰ This kind of providential justice enabled evil magic to be traced or rebounded back onto the witch. For example, after his cows inexplicably killed themselves running into trees, a farmer cut the ears from the bewitched beasts and put them in a fire. Supposedly, “the Witch would be in misery and could not rest till they were plucked out”. In due course, Julian Cox came up “raging and scolding that they had abused her without cause, but she went presently to the fire and took out the Ears that were burning, and then she was quiet.”¹⁸¹ Sometimes the victims saw visions of their tormentor, as in the case of the witches of Warboys.¹⁸² More commented how these betrayals proved that witches “serve a very perfidious Master”.¹⁸³

6.7 Summary Conclusion

Clark argues it is an over-simplification to say that most early modern people, including intellectuals like More, believed in demons and witchcraft. Demonology was a controversial topic and there were competing ideas and theories, including outright scepticism, although the Bible proclaimed that angels, demons and witches

¹⁷⁸ “a very remarkable story [...] told me by Mr. [William] Brearly, once Fellow of Christs Colledge in Cambridge” More, ‘Advertisement’ following Relation VIII in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 205-7.

¹⁷⁹ “A friend of mine told me this story” More, *AA*, III.ii pp. 109-10.

¹⁸⁰ More, *AA*, III.ii p. 110. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1991), II.iv p. 110 [(1583), p. 160; (1660), p. 107].

¹⁸¹ MP, ‘Relation VIII’, Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 193-4.

¹⁸² More, *AA*, III.iv p. 116. Probably from Anon., *Witches of Warboys*, passim.

¹⁸³ More, *AA*, III.vi pp. 124-5.

were real and the law reinforced that position.¹⁸⁴ More evaluated the competing theories using the case evidence of miraculous and supernatural effects that he attributed to angels, demons and witches. He declared, “that there are *wicked Spirits* or *evil Genii*, as well as *good*, the Religion of the Pagans, and the Confession of Witches, and the Effects of them in the possessed are a sufficient argument.”¹⁸⁵

Coudert was over-generous in stating that More and Glanvill “were so careful about the kind of evidence they allowed” that they “rejected the more titillating and amazing stories of flying witches, demonic Sabbaths, and supernatural events” resulting in a collection of “essentially silly stories of poltergeists and minor bewitchments”.¹⁸⁶ Her comments, derived from her focus on More’s work with Glanvill, overlook how many of these extraordinary cases More sourced from continental demonologists in his earlier works. However, I think Coudert is absolutely correct that More was not a true Sceptic (in the Pyrrhonist sense of the word), but only one by expediency and accident, and his understanding of what constituted a valid scientific explanation was poor.¹⁸⁷ In presenting a series of alternative and non-falsifiable hypotheses to account for the same phenomena (such as physical bodily transformations, spirit vehicles, and demonic illusions), he was inadvertently sabotaging his attempt at scientific method to the extreme that even one’s own senses could not be trusted.

Historical analysis has enabled us to understand the complex cultural contexts, sociological processes and emotional functions of angels, demons and witchcraft in providing coping strategies for misfortune, guilt, and rebelliousness. In conjunction with what we now know of human psychology and phenomenology, we can better understand how early modern culture might make sense of extraordinary personal experiences within a supernatural framework. For example, knowing that demonic possession was an expression of cultural expectations, and knowing about the symptoms of conditions such as brief psychotic disorder, we can more readily

¹⁸⁴ Stuart Clark, ‘Part 3: Witchcraft and Magic in Early Modern Culture’, ii, in Bengt Ankarloo, Stuart Clark & William Monter eds., *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Vol. 4 - The Period of the Witch Trials* (London: Athlone Press, 2002), 97-169, p. 123.

¹⁸⁵ More, *GMG*, VI.xi p.243.

¹⁸⁶ Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, p. 133.

¹⁸⁷ Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 127-9.

understand how both a sufferer and their social network interpret an experience within their cultural framework. Thus realism and relativism can cooperate to enhance our depth of understanding. More himself seemed quite emotionally detached from the case material, and had no interest in the judicial process, the interpersonal relationships between accusers and accused, gender, or in many of the other social, cultural and psychological elements that historians wrestle with today. More's interest in angels, demons and witchcraft was almost exclusively an intellectual exercise of metaphysics, and his passion was only invoked when people like Webster disagreed with him. In demonstrating the ubiquity and reality of angels, demons and witches across time and space, he disregarded cultural distinctions, presenting a jumble of British, continental, Biblical and Classical cases that supported his own metaphysical theories of immaterial, immortal, and extended aerial spirits as part of his anti-atheist agenda.

7 Spirit of Nature and Plastic Power of the Soul

7.1 Introduction

More's concept of the Spirit of Nature was an immaterial and universal principle that endowed otherwise inert matter with movement, organisation and animation. It provided a solution to what More saw as the theological challenges of dualism of matter and spirit: atheistic materialism and animism. The Spirit of Nature was derived from the Platonic concept of the soul of the world, the *anima mundi*, in which the world was alive and endowed with intelligence and a soul by God, subsequently adapted to a non-rational version by both ancient and early modern Neoplatonists, such as Plotinus and Ficino.¹ More's concept of the Spirit of Nature evolved over the course of his career, but his key definition was set out in 1659: "*The Spirit of Nature [...] is, A substance incorporeal, but without Sense and Animadversion, pervading the whole Matter of the Universe, and exercising a plastical power therein according to the sundry predispositions and occasions in the parts it works upon, raising such Phaenomena in the World, by directing the parts of the Matter and their Motion, as cannot be resolved into meer Mechanical powers.*"² He included an expanded version in 1679: "the Spirit of Nature [...] is an incorporeal substance endowed with life, at least, if not with a rather obscure sense, containing vitally within itself the general laws of natural motion and the union of the parts of Worldly Matter, and the Ideas or *Plastic* Reasons of natural bodies, and acting according to those reasons or Ideas in the Worldly Matter when the opportunity arises, by which it conserves and propagates the combinations and the order of the whole material world and the species and forms of individual corporeal things."³

The concept of a Spirit of Nature first appeared in More's poems as *Physis*, which he explained was "*Spermaticall*", "the lowest order of life [...] not rationally, sensitive or

¹ For a detailed exposition on the wider history of the Spirit of Nature, see Reid, *Metaphysics*, pp. 313-48.

² More, *IS*, III.xii p. 450.

³ More, *EM*, 2nd edition in *OO* (1679), 'Scholia in Cap xxviii, Sect. 21', p. 329 [(1995), Part 1, p.138].

imaginative, but vegetative.”⁴ He distinguished *Physis* from *Psyche*, the soul of the world or universe, and equivalent to the Christian Holy Spirit. *Psyche* was the higher order intellectual soul that was “kindling and exciting the dead mist, the utmost projection of her own life into an Aethereall vivacity, and working in this, by her plasmaticall Spirits or Archei, all the whole world into order and shape, fitting this sacred Animal for perfect sense, establishing that in being, which before was next to nothing”.⁵ In contrast, *Physis* was created by, but independent from, God: “an Artificers imagination separate from the Artificer”.⁶ Whilst *Physis* was primarily vegetative, it was also the origin of “Plasticall power” in animals and “all magnetick power”.⁷ Thus the “*spermatick* spright” was “left alone to work by it self without animadversion. Hence *Physis* or Nature is sometimes puzzeld and bungells in ill disposed matter, because its power is not absolute and omnipotent.”⁸

In More’s metaphysics, the Spirit of Nature moved and shaped matter that otherwise had no soul of its own to activate it. Thus he explained in *The Immortality of the Soul* (1659) the Spirit of Nature coordinated gravity, magnetism, plant formation and the nest-building of birds.⁹ In 1662, he incorporated the findings of Boyle’s air pump experiments commenting that they “plainly demonstrate there must be some *Immaterial* Being that exercises its *directive* Activity on the *Matter* of the World.”¹⁰ In *Enchiridion Metaphysicum* (1671), More challenged competing mechanical theories and proposed that the Hylarchic Principle (another name for the Spirit of Nature) accounted for all the physical phenomena of the observable universe, from gravity and rainbows to the operations of the mind, apparitions and prophecies.¹¹ In the 1679 Latin edition of his works, he added further details on the Spirit of Nature, especially its role in the findings from air pump and hydrostatics experiments.¹² In 1681, he repeated his assertion that “the *Omniform Spirit of Nature*, that guides and

⁴ More, *PP*, ‘The Interpretation Generall’, pp. 432-3.

⁵ More, *PP*, ‘Notes upon Psychozoia’, pp. 335-6, 342.

⁶ More, *PP*, ‘Notes upon Psychozoia’, pp. 346.

⁷ More, *PP*, ‘The Interpretation Generall’, p. 434.

⁸ More, *Platonica*, ‘The Argument of ANTIPSYCHOP ANNYCHIA. Cant. 2.’, p. 230; More, *PP*, ‘Notes upon Psychozoia’, p. 346.

⁹ More, *IS*, III.xii-xiii, pp. 449-470.

¹⁰ More, *AA*, 3rd edition in *CPSW* (1662), II.ii.vii, Section 7, p. 43. From Boyle, *New experiments physico-mechanicall* [*Boyle Works*, I, pp. 141-301].

¹¹ More, *EM*, xi-xxvi pp. 102-350 [(1995), Part II, pp. 1-265].

¹² More, *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, passim and especially in *EM*.

modifies the gross matter according to certain vital Laws the Creator”, controlled the shape and movement of all celestial bodies, the power of magnetism and loadstones, and the fluctuation of the tides in conjunction with the lunar cycle.¹³

The Spirit of Nature therefore provided More with an explanation for both regular and irregular physical phenomena through an interaction between immaterial spirit and inert matter. This avoided invoking a sentient animistic Nature, or endowing matter with movement and reducing these effects to the output of mere mechanical clockwork. The Spirit of Nature and its plastic power was the causal agent of Nature and Providence; including the cause of nature’s ‘bungles’ such as foetal anomalies. The Spirit of Nature was also his alternative explanation for magical sympathy through its ability to coordinate material changes across distances. Greene dubbed it “a catch-all for the inexplicable.”¹⁴ For the most part, historians writing about the Spirit of Nature have focussed on the controversy More initiated by appropriating the findings of experimental science and there is scarcely any mention of the extraordinary phenomena that More also presented as evidence for it.¹⁵ In this section, More’s neglected evidences will be explored, together with some other cases of related phenomena such as the power of the imagination.

7.2 Nature and Divine Providence

More regarded the Spirit of Nature as the agent that enacted God’s Laws of Nature. It was the cause of all motion, activity and regularity in nature including: gravity; tides; magnetism; the magnitude, shape and movement of celestial bodies including comets; light and colour; meteors and clouds; raindrops and rainbows; lightning and thunder; and the formation and structure of plants and animals.¹⁶ For example, he argued the Spirit of Nature was the only logical explanation for the consistently feathery pattern of frost on a window;¹⁷ it also accounted for how plants could grow

¹³ More, *TA*, pp. 80-1, 84.

¹⁴ Greene, ‘Spirit of Nature’, p. 461.

¹⁵ For more detail on the controversy, see Greene, ‘Spirit of Nature’, pp. 451-74; Henry, ‘Spirit of Nature’, pp. 55-76; Hall, *Henry More*, pp. 114-8, 168-201; Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 143-162.

¹⁶ More, *EM*, xi-xxvi pp. 102-350 [(1995), Part II, pp. 1-265].

¹⁷ More, *AA*, 3rd edition in *CSPW* (1662), II.ii p. 47.

into their normal mature forms from mere cuttings, without even the vegetative soul, the seminal spirit of seed, to guide it.¹⁸

The Spirit of Nature was also responsible for the irregular phenomena of nature because it could both regulate and suspend natural laws in its role as the “great *Quarter-master-General* of divine Providence”.¹⁹ Thus the Spirit of Nature was the agent responsible for the cases of providential floods, earthquakes, eclipses, comets, meteors, and thunder and lightning discussed in chapter four. It was also the agent for all types of extraordinary prodigies, signs and “accidents” in Nature, such as clouds that rained down “bloud, stones, milk, corn, frogs, fire, earth” or the “prognostick of weather from the Redness of the skie”.²⁰ Incidentally, cases of bizarre precipitation do occur, such as the ‘blood’ rain (caused by a stressed microalgae) in Zamora, Spain, and the fish ‘rain’ (probably caused by a tornado) in Chilaw, Sri Lanka, both in 2014.²¹

The Spirit of Nature was the agent of ‘accidents’ or prodigies in Nature, and these phenomena could be interpreted to ‘divine’ the future, as Apollonius of Tyana had reportedly done. More outlined a number of examples, of which the first two here were tenuous, and the second two were more specific. First, whilst on his journey to India, Apollonius came across a slain lioness with eight unborn cubs inside her, from which he divined that he and his companion, Damis, would have to stay with the King of Babylon for one year (one lion) and eight months (eight cubs). Second, Apollonius looked up to the heavens following thunder during an eclipse at Rome and “said that it were a great marvail indeed if this should end in nought”; three days later, a lightning bolt struck Emperor Nero’s cup “out of his hand, as he was drinking” but without harming him. Third, following the monstrous birth of a child with three heads in Syracuse, Sicily, Apollonius predicted that three Roman Emperors would rapidly succeed one another, i.e. Galba, Otho and Vitellius in 69CE.

¹⁸ More, *IS*, 2nd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.xiii p. 199.

¹⁹ More, *IS*, III.xiii, p. 469.

²⁰ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 262; *TA*, p. 27. From *AKJV*, Matthew 16:1-3.

²¹ The Information and Scientific News Service (SINC) [Spanish Foundation for Science and Technology], A ‘blood rain’ infiltrates villages of Spain, [<https://www.agenciasinc.es/en/News/A-blood-rain-infiltrates-villages-of-Spain> last accessed 5th December 2018] & BBC News, Fish rain down on Sri Lanka village, [<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-27298939> last accessed 5th December 2018].

Fourth, Apollonius correctly predicted that Domitian would be killed in 96CE by Stephanus, the steward of Domitian's niece, after an unusual halo appeared around the sun. Whilst in Ephesus, Apollonius had a vision of this murder in Rome at the exact moment it happened, although More argued the 'vision' was effected by demonic spirits.²²

More declared the beauty, symmetry and utility of plants and animals were arguments for divine providence because these were intellectual principles, designed and created by God.²³ More maintained that "*Animal Life*", senses and passions, were governed directly by the animal soul, in contrast to Descartes' argument that animals were "mere *Machina's*".²⁴ In 1660 he described several examples of animal behaviour that he attributed to these passions, especially affection and organised cooperation. An animal's "*Self-love*", or self-preservation, was thus "a warrantable Principle of life implanted by God in Nature for the good and welfare of the Creature". For example, many animals show affection, love and gratitude, especially dogs so loyal to their masters that they would risk their lives to protect them and "have had so deep a sense of Sorrow at their death, that they have thereupon voluntarily pined away themselves and died."²⁵ More described the instinctive 'political' organisation and 'wisdom' of animals that governed their behaviour in the absence of "Faculties of *Reason* and *Understanding*".²⁶ Examples included the extraordinary "*Commonwealth of Bees*" with their division of labour, support for their "King" [Queen], and carrying stones in their feet for ballast when flying in strong winds.²⁷ In another case he described how cranes take turns as "Captain" to lead the flock and to keep watch whilst the others slept. Whilst on guard, the

²² More, *GMG*, IV.x pp. 123-4. From Philostratus, *Apollonius*, I.xxii; IV.xliii; V.xiii; VIII.xxiii; VIII.xxv. Halos are atmospheric optical phenomena produced by ice crystals refracting and reflecting light and include the circular halo (or the 22° halo), light pillars, and sun dogs. See Atmospheric Optics, *Ice Crystal Halos*, [<http://www.atoptics.co.uk/halosim.htm>] last accessed 3rd December 2018].

²³ More, *AA*, II.v-xi pp. 59-93.

²⁴ More, *IS*, I.viii p. 52; *GMG*, II.ix-x, pp. 46-52; *IS*, 2nd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.xiii pp. 200-1.

²⁵ More, *GMG*, II.ix, pp. 46-7. Probably from Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VIII.xl [(1634), pp. 218-20].

²⁶ More, *GMG*, II.ix-x, pp. 46-51.

²⁷ More, *GMG*, II.ix, p. 48. From Aristotle, *History of Animals*, V.xxi-xxii & Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XI.v-xx [(1634), pp. 312-22]. Although More cited Aristotle and Pliny, the report of bees carrying stones was also reported by Virgil in *Georgicks*, IV (1628, pp. 111-38).

‘captain’ holds a stone in one foot so if it fell asleep, the falling of the stone would wake it up again.²⁸

More provided some cases concerning the “shadow” of “*Religion*” and “adoration” by animals for Nature itself. More reported from Pliny the Elder that elephants had “a religious observance of the Stars, and Veneration of the Sun and Moon” as evidenced by reports from Mauritius where elephants came from the woods to wash themselves in the river every new moon and offer their “salutations to the Moon” through this “solemn purification”.²⁹ Similarly he noted from Pliny how monkeys showed “adoration” for the arrival of the new moon.³⁰ More also described the behaviour of the legendary Cynocephali (a dog-headed ape, probably a baboon based on the descriptions from Aristotle and Pliny) that were so attuned to the lunar cycle that they went blind when the moon lost its light; the menstrual cycle of the females matched the lunar cycle so exactly that Egyptians kept them in their temples to observe the course of the moon more precisely.³¹

Rather than being ‘created’, some animals such as frogs, mice, insects and spiders were believed to be spontaneously ‘generated’ from putrefying matter and thus were ‘imperfect’ animals without souls. In 1653, More attributed the generation and inherent behaviour, or natural instincts, of these creatures “born of putrefaction” to ‘Providence’.³² More also credited an account of raindrops transforming into frogs,³³ and the “*Tree Geese*” from Lancashire that were reported to be “bred out of rotten pieces of broken ships and trunks of Trees [...] bred thus of putrefaction”. This was the largest animal to spontaneously generate and More noted that these ‘barnacle geese’ were as complete and functional as any produced through normal procreation.³⁴ As More added more details on the Spirit of Nature into the 1662 edition of his collected works, he assigned the governance of these spontaneously

²⁸ More, *GMG*, II.ix p. 48. From Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, X.xxiii [(1634), p. 281].

²⁹ More, *GMG*, II.x p. 49. From Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VIII.i [(1634), p. 192].

³⁰ More, *GMG*, II.x p. 49. From Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VIII.liv [(1634), p. 231].

³¹ More, *GMG*, II.x p. 49. Probably from Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VII.ii [(1634), p. 157] & VIII.liv [(1634), p. 232] and Aristotle, *History of Animals*, II.v. Both Pliny and Aristotle described these creatures but as far as I can see, neither mentioned their relationship to the moon.

³² More, *AA*, III.xii p. 157 [(1655+), III.xv] & II.ix p. 81. The theory of spontaneous generation dated back to Aristotle, *History of Animals*, V.i.

³³ More, *IS*, II.xv p. 276. From Vanini, *De Admirandis Nature*, X p. 58 & XXX p. 201.

³⁴ More, *AA*, III.xii p. 157 [(1655+), III.xv]. From Gerard, *The herball*, III.clxxi pp. 1587-9.

generated creatures to the Spirit of Nature. In particular, he explained that spiders could spin their geometric webs and silkworms knew how to spin their cocoons and transform into the silkmoth even though they were not instructed by their parents, as the eggs often hatched independently or even after the death of the adult. He commented how these imperfect creatures “as soon as they are bred, can set up shop and fall to their trade of weaving without any Teacher or Instructor.”³⁵

More began to consider whether the Spirit of Nature also coordinated some of the more elaborate behaviour of ‘perfect’ animals, especially those behaviours that were identical within a species across a vast distance, such as the design of nests and the songs of birds, unique to each species, and the complex hives of bees. Their basic animal souls had no intellectual reason or creative art to devise such structures or music on their own. Some behaviours were even detrimental to the survival of the individual animal. He thus concluded that they were “inspired and carried away in a natural rapture by this *Spirit of Nature*”, being the “*Vicarious power of God*”, to do what was “most conducing to the Conservation of the Whole [species]” and often “against their particular Interests”.³⁶

More also included some extraordinary cases of monstrous races that he described as “prodigious Deviations” of the “Laws of Nature are sometimes violated by her own Prerogative [i.e. the Spirit of Nature]”.³⁷ He described “whole Nations absolutely monstrous or misshapen”, including the Cynocephali (dog-headed apes with tails), Acephali (people with their faces in their torsos and thus no head protruding above their shoulders), Monoculi (people with a single eye in the middle of their forehead, called Arimaspi by Pliny), Monocoli of Tartary (people from central Asia with only one arm and one leg, yet able to run swiftly, called Monoscelli or Sciopodes by Pliny), and Enoticoeti of California (people with such long ears that they reached the ground and at night they would wrap themselves in their ears like bedsheets).³⁸ He

³⁵ More, *IS*, 2nd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.xiii p. 201. From Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, XI.x, xi, xxii, xxiv [(1634), pp. 314-5, 322-4].

³⁶ More, *IS*, 2nd edition in *CSPW* (1662), III.xiii pp. 200-3.

³⁷ More, *DD-123*, II.xiii, pp. 244-5.

³⁸ More, *DD-123*, II.xiii pp. 245-50. Probably from Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VII.ii [(1634), pp. 153-7] and John Mandeville, *The Voyages and Travailes of Sir John Maundevile Knight. Wherein is treated of the way towards Hierusalem, and of the mervailles of Inde, with other Lands and*

also described horned people of Cathay (China) and people with tails in the mountains of Borneo, and suggested that they were like “*Satyrs, Monkeys and Baboons*, that are of a middle nature betwixt *Men* and *Beasts*”. Another middle stage between beast and plant was represented by the ‘Boranetz’ from Tartary (the ‘vegetable lamb’, possibly a type of wooly fern – *cibitium barometz*).³⁹ More explained that these variations gave man clarity of distinction between the normal and the abnormal, and a greater appreciation for the normal, using a musical analogy: “playing upon their severall Affections and Faculties as a Musician on the sundry Keys of an Organ or Virginals. And that Stop which is a Discord of it self, yet not being too long stood upon, makes the succeeding Harmony more sweet.”⁴⁰

7.3 Sympathy

Sympathy (and antipathy) was the classical concept that all things were connected in the universe through natural harmonies and oppositions, forces that attracted and repelled, that resonated or clashed. For Neoplatonists especially, sympathy was a fundamental agent at the heart of natural magic.⁴¹ More ridiculed the concept of natural magic and considered that any effects attributed to it were more likely produced by demons.⁴² More’s personal understanding of sympathy was a Christianised version in which the occult properties of nature were explained and understood theologically and metaphysically through the Spirit of Nature, rather than things having inherent properties that resonated with each other across the universe; it should not be inappropriately misunderstood as a ‘magical’ worldview.⁴³ Thus More argued that the sympathetic vibration of an untouched musical string tuned in unison with another string that was struck could not be caused by the vibration of the

Countries (London: Thomas Este, 1582), li & lxii. In both sources, the people with very large ears were from India not California.

³⁹ More, *DD-123*, II.xiii, pp. 250-1. Horned men and the lamb-plant probably from Mandeville, *Voyages*, lxxxiv & lxxxvii. People with tails (albeit in India, not Borneo) probably from Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, VII.ii [(1634), pp. 153-7].

⁴⁰ More, *DD-123*, II.xiii p. 245.

⁴¹ Seth Lobis, *The Virtue of Sympathy: Magic, Philosophy, and Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 6-8 and passim. See Plotinus, *The Six Enneads*, ‘The Fourth Ennead: Fourth Tractate – Problems of the Soul’, xl.

⁴² More, *AA*, 4th edition in *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, III.ix p. 121 [(1712), p. 168].

⁴³ I agree completely with Sarah Hutton on this point. Compare: Sarah Hutton, ‘Book Review - *The Virtue of Sympathy: Magic, Philosophy, and Literature in Seventeenth-Century England* by Seth Lobis’, *Renaissance Quarterly*, 69:1 (2014), 384-5, p. 385; Lobis, *Sympathy*, especially pp. 52, 205-6.

air, because other strings tuned to different pitches, or a thread of silk hung near it, did not vibrate. Instead, he explained that “both the strings are united with some one *incorporeal* Being, which has a different *Unity* and *Activity* from *Matter*, but yet a *Sympathy* therewith; which affecting this *immaterial* Being, makes it affect the *Matter* in the same manner in another place, where it does sympathize with that other in some predisposition or qualification, as these two strings doe in being tuned *Unisons* to one another: and this, without sending any particles to the *Matter* it does thus act upon”.⁴⁴

Possibly the most well-known application of the power of sympathy was the weapon-salve—a preparation applied to the weapon rather than the wound in order to heal it. The Swiss physician and alchemist, Paracelsus [Philippus Aureolus Theophrastus Bombastus von Hohenheim, 1493/4-1541] was the first to publish on weapon-salve, attributing its effects to magical sympathy.⁴⁵ Sir Kenelm Digby published his account of the *Powder of Sympathy*, with a materialist explanation of contagion caused by atoms transported by vapours.⁴⁶ More disagreed and instead ascribed all sympathetic effects to “the *Unity* of the *Soul of the Universe*”.⁴⁷ More challenged Digby’s atomic transfer theory by arguing that cold atoms would warm up and hot atoms cool down during transit, especially in his examples of “*Sympathetick Cures, Pains and Asswagements*” that transferred heat to and from specific remote locations. He described how “*Magnetick Remedies*, as some call them, they can make the wound dolorously hot or chill at a great distance”; boiling over a pan of milk would cause a cow’s udders to become inflamed; and merely “by the burning of their excrements” a person’s internal organs could be injured by scalding.⁴⁸ He also described how wines ‘worked’ in synchrony with the flowering

⁴⁴ More, *IS*, III.xii pp. 451-3.

⁴⁵ Lobis, *Sympathy*, pp. 40-4.

⁴⁶ Elizabeth Hedrick, ‘Romancing the Salve: Sir Kenelm Digby and the Powder of Sympathy’, *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 41:2 (2008), 161-85, especially 184. Kenelm Digby, *A Late Discourse made in a Solemne Assembly of Nobles and Learned Men at Montpellier in France: Touching the Cure of Wounds by the Powder of Sympathy; with Instructions how to make the said Powder; whereby many other Secrets of Nature are unfolded*, translated by R. White (London: R. Lownes, and T Davies, 1658), passim.

⁴⁷ More, *IS*, II.x p. 221.

⁴⁸ More, *IS*, III.xii pp. 453-4. Probably from Digby, *Powder*, pp. 147-8, 118, 123-4, 127-8 and van Helmont, *Ortus Medicinae*, ‘Supplementum’, xv, ‘De Magnetica vulnerum curatione’, p. 593-620, [(1664), ‘A Treatise of Diseases’, cxii, ‘Of the Magnetick or Attractive Curing of Wounds’, pp. 756-94).

of the distant vines.⁴⁹ More ignored Digby's claims concerning the healing of James Howell, suggesting that he—like many other contemporaries—did not believe Digby.⁵⁰

The power of sympathy, operating through the Spirit of Nature, was also evident in injuries appearing in the exact locations on the physical bodies of those whose soul apparition or 'astral body' was attacked. More commented on the witch Jane Brooks (a case originally reported by Glanvill) who appeared as an apparition seen only by a boy. One man stabbed at the wall where the child said Brooks was and she was subsequently found to have a wound in her hand.⁵¹ More also described how the apparition of the witch Julian Cox was stabbed in the leg and her physical body was found to have a fresh wound in the leg.⁵² More explained some of the effects resulting from the sympathetic connection of spirit and body, including the discomfort caused to Cox when the ears of her livestock victims were burned, the witch-cat killed with the fire-fork, and the counter-magic of the witch-bottle.⁵³ More argued that a rival theory—that a demon simultaneously mimicked the injury on the body—was implausible and unnecessary, as his own theory was simple and sufficient; "that the *Spirit of Nature* is snatcht into consent with the imagination of the Soules in these *Astral* bodies or *aiery Vehicles*. Which act of imagining must needs be strong in them, it being so set on and assisted by a quick and sharp pain and fright in these scaldings, woundings, and stroaks on the back".⁵⁴

7.4 Imagination, Enthusiasm and Melancholic Delusion

Irrational delusion was an extraordinary phenomenon that fascinated More because he considered that reason was the distinguishing characteristic of humanity. The

⁴⁹ More, *IS*, III.xii p. 454. Probably from Digby, *Powder*, pp. 82-3 and van Helmont, *Ortus Medicinae*, 'Tractatus de Morbis', xvii, 'Vis Magnetica', pp. 488-9 [(1664), 'A Treatise of Diseases', lxxxiii, 'The Magnetick or Attractive Power or Faculty', p. 614].

⁵⁰ More, *IS*, III.xii pp. 455-6; Hedrick, 'Romancing the Salve', pp. 161-185, especially 184. See also Digby, *Powder*, pp. 6-14.

⁵¹ More, *IS*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), 'Scholia', III.xii p. 432 [(1712), p. 216]; *AA*, 4th edition in *OO* (1679), 'Scholia', III.xi p. 129 [(1712), pp. 174-5]. See also Glanvill, *A blow*, pp. 126-34.

⁵² More, 'Advertisement' following Relation VIII in Glanvill, *ST*, II pp. 201-2, 205. More was referring back to Relation VIII.

⁵³ See chapter six, pp. 213, 218-9.

⁵⁴ More, *IS*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), 'Scholia', III.xii p. 432 [(1712), p. 216]; *IS*, III.xii, p. 455.

modern definition of delusion, which is consistent with the early modern understanding of delusion, is “A false belief based on incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly held despite what almost everyone else believes and despite what constitutes incontrovertible and obvious proof or evidence to the contrary.”⁵⁵ Roy Porter cautioned that mental illness was “an extremely broad sociocultural category” and could be seen as medical, moral, religious, or diabolic, and the “language of madness” both served medical diagnosis but also expressed cultural values.⁵⁶ MacDonald explained that this was, and still is, the case because mental disorders affect people’s relationships with one another and are more influenced by social and cultural factors than purely physiological illnesses.⁵⁷

The symptoms of ‘melancholy’ included delusions and depression and it was thought to originate from an imbalance of the bodily humour black bile [Greek *melan* (black) + *chol* (bile)].⁵⁸ More noted that melancholics often became fixed on “one particular absurd imagination” such that “all the evidence of reason to the contrary cannot remove it”, even though in other respects the person might remain as rational as anyone else.⁵⁹ Burton was the first to define the two extremes of religious melancholy, “*Excesse and Defect*”, i.e. enthusiasm and atheism.⁶⁰ More used cases of delusion, especially those exhibiting selective irrationality, and juxtaposed them with the ‘enthusiastic’ ideas of the radical sects, including the Familists, Quakers, Ranters and Seekers, that he considered a threat to established Christianity.⁶¹ The term ‘Enthusiast’ was a derogatory label applied to those who held unorthodox or extreme ideas in religion, society, politics, medicine or philosophy.⁶²

In particular, More strove to refute the radicals’ claims to personal divine revelation—being “extraordinarily *inspired of God*”—by providing the more

⁵⁵ American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-5*, ‘Appendix’ p. 819.

⁵⁶ Roy Porter, *Mind-Forg’d Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* (London: Penguin, 1990 (1987 Athlone Press)), p. x.

⁵⁷ MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, p. 1.

⁵⁸ Roy Porter, *Madness: A Brief History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 36-41.

⁵⁹ More, *ET*, pp.10-1.

⁶⁰ Burton, *Melancholy*, III.iv pp. 706-58.

⁶¹ Hutton, ‘Jacob Boehme’, p. 148.

⁶² Heyd, *Sober and Reasonable*, ‘Introduction’ pp. 2-8.

mundane explanations of deliberate fraud or delusional madness.⁶³ More explained, “Now to be *inspired*, is to be moved in an extraordinary manner by the power or Spirit of God to act, speak, or think what is holy, just, and true. From hence it will be easily understood what *Enthusiasme* is, viz. A full, but false perswasion in a man that he is inspired.” More presented the “misconceit of being *inspired*” as a symptom of a “mischievous Disease”, thus was one of the first to diagnose the Enthusiasts as ‘madmen’ suffering from religious melancholy.⁶⁴

The rational soul sometimes struggled to control the imagination, which could both influence perception and behaviour and in turn be influenced by physical sensations from the body. More regarded the imagination as semi-autonomous, able to “steal upon the Soul, or rise out of her without any consent of hers”. The imagination could take over completely in dreams, and even intrude into waking thoughts due to its “enormous strength and vigour”.⁶⁵ This power was illustrated in the examples of melancholic delusion that More selected from Burton, who had collected them from the works of continental physicians. One man used an ointment [*“Unguentum populeum”* made of poplar leaves, animal fat and narcotics such as poppy, henbane and nightshade⁶⁶] to help him to sleep, but he took against the smell and became deluded that everyone and any new item of clothing smelled of it, to the extent that he would insist people talked to him from a distance and refused any new clothes. Yet, in contrast to total raving madness, More noted “in all other things he was wise and discreet, and would talk as sensibly as other men.”⁶⁷ Another man accidentally swallowed frogspawn and became convinced he had frogs living inside him. He consulted many physicians, who assured him that the frogs could not survive, and he even trained as a physician himself to find a ‘cure’, yet he held this conviction for

⁶³ More, *ET*, p. 13.

⁶⁴ More, *ET*, p. 2; Fouke, *Enthusiastical Concerns*, pp. 230, 234.

⁶⁵ More, *ET*, pp. 3 & 6. See also Vermeir, ‘Imagination’, pp. 119-37.

⁶⁶ Juhani Norri, *Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary in English, 1375–1550: Body Parts, Sickness, Instruments and Medicinal Preparations* (London: Routledge, 2016), p. 861.

⁶⁷ More, *ET*, p. 11. From Burton, *Melancholy*, I.iii.i.iii pp. 248-9 [from Du Laurens, *Melancholike diseases* (1594, 1599), II.vii pp. 102-3]. Although More copied Burton's text faithfully, Burton's source was Du Laurens. Du Laurens reported that the only thing the poet could not stand was the ointment, rather than people or clothes.

many years despite being “a learned and prudent man”.⁶⁸ One man believed he was made out of butter, and would not go near a fire in case he melted,⁶⁹ whilst another thought he was made of glass and would not let anyone near him in case they accidentally broke him.⁷⁰ Believing oneself to be made of glass was a surprisingly common delusion in the late medieval and early modern period: the most famous sufferer was King Charles VI ‘the Mad’ of France [1368-1422], who had specially padded clothes reinforced with steel rods to help protect his supposedly fragile body.⁷¹

More understood that dreams and imagination could over-rule the senses by agitating the animal spirits that governed the body.⁷² Visual, auditory, tactile, and olfactory hallucinations⁷³ disregarded objective evidence and served to reinforce the delusion. In another case, a gentlewoman of Mantua, Italy—who believed she was married to a king—would kneel and talk to ‘the king’ and also claimed that any fragment of glass or shiny rubbish she found was a precious jewel given to her by her royal husband.⁷⁴ One gentleman of Limousin, France, was knocked down by a boar and although unhurt, he was convinced he had lost one of his legs.⁷⁵ More referred to a case from ‘Cartesius’ of a man who continued to feel pain in his fingers when his whole arm had been amputated. The closest match I can find to this last case in Descartes concerned a girl whose arm was amputated at the elbow, but otherwise the circumstances (the deliberate concealment of the surgery using blindfolds and

⁶⁸ More, *ET*, pp. 11-2. From Burton, *Melancholy*, I.iii.ii.ii pp. 258-9 [from Felix Plater [Felicis Plateri], *Observationum, in Hominis Affectibus plerisque corpori et animo, functionum laesione, dolore, aliave molestia et vitio incommoantibus, Libri Tres* (Basel: 1614), I pp. 40-1].

⁶⁹ More, *ET*, p. 11. From Burton, *Melancholy*, I.iii.i.iii p. 248 [from Marcello Donato, *De Medica Historia Mirabili Libri Sex* (Mantua: 1586), II.i p. 34v].

⁷⁰ More, *ET*, p. 11. From Burton, *Melancholy*, I.iii.i.iii p. 248 [from Du Laurens, *Melancholike diseases*, II.vii p. 102]. See chapter three, pp. 115-6 in this thesis.

⁷¹ Gill Speak, ‘An odd kind of melancholy: reflections on the glass delusion in Europe (1440-1680)’, *History of Psychiatry*, 1.2 (1990), 191-206, p. 193; Petteri Pietikäinen, *Madness: A History* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 64. From Pius II, ‘The Commentaries of Pius II: Books VI-IX’, translation by Florence Alden Gragg, *Smith College Studies in History*, 35 (1951), 413-618, pp. 425-6.

⁷² More, *ET*, pp. 3-4.

⁷³ For an overview of hallucinations, see chapter four, p. 148.

⁷⁴ More, *ET*, p. 39. From Burton, *Melancholy*, I.iii.i.iv p. 250 [from Donato, *De Medica Historia Mirabili*, II.i p. 35v].

⁷⁵ More, *ET*, p. 11. From Burton, *Melancholy*, I.iii.i.iii p. 249 [from Antoine Du Verdier in Pedro Mexia [Mexio], Francesco Sansouino and Antoine [Anthonie] Du Verdier, *The Tresurie of Auncient and Moderne Times* (London: W. Jaggard, 1613), V.xxvi p. 248]. Burton added that the man was cured by two Franciscans, and Du Verdier that it was two years between the attack and the cure.

bandages and the reported pains in the fingers) were the same.⁷⁶ The perception of sensation in phantom limbs is a common experience and modern studies show up to 98% of amputees experience phantom pain (usually caused by neural activity in the brain region responsible for sensation in the missing body part), with some phantoms persisting for decades. Most famously, British naval commander Lord Horatio Nelson [1758-1805] experienced the sensation of his missing fingers digging into his phantom right palm and this convinced him of the existence of the soul.⁷⁷

Sometimes external agents, including the weather, narcotics, food and alcohol, were responsible for altering the imagination to the extent that behaviour was affected and social or physical limitations could be overcome.⁷⁸ More cited a case from the Italian physician, Epifanio Ferdinando [1569-1638], of an old man “that could scarce creep with a staff” yet after he had been bitten by a tarantula, “upon the hearing of Musick leaped and skipped like a young kid.”⁷⁹ Dancing to lively music (now known as the tarantella) as a cure for ‘tarantism’ was first reported in the eleventh century and became more popular in southern Italy in the early modern period and became associated with Saint Vitus’s dancing mania in Germany.⁸⁰ Through the power of nourishment upon the imagination, even food and drink could “change a mans disposition into the nature of that creature whose bloud or milk doth nourish him.”⁸¹ More gave a series of examples from Sennert including: a girl who began to cry and move like a cat—including watching and chasing mice—after drinking cat’s blood to try to cure a seizure; a man fed with pig’s blood who “took a speciall pleasure in wallowing and tumbling himself in the mire”; a girl fed on goat’s milk who skipped and grazed from trees; and, another person that “by eating the brains of a Bear became of a Bear-like disposition”⁸² Although these effects on the imagination were usually moderated through reason, reason could be deliberately

⁷⁶ More, *ET*, pp. 4-5. Probably from Descartes, *Principia philosophiae* (1644), IV.cxcvi pp. 301-2 [(1983, 1991), p. 280].

⁷⁷ V. S. Ramachandran & William Hirstein, ‘The perception of phantom limbs: The D. O. Hebb lecture’, *Brain*, 121 (1998), 1603-30.

⁷⁸ More, *ET*, p. 8.

⁷⁹ More, *ET*, p. 8. From Epifanio Ferdinando [Epiphanius Ferdinandus], *Centum Historiae, seu observationes et casus medici, omnes fere medicinae partes* (Venice: 1621), LXXXI.ii.xl p. 257. More gave the victim’s age as ninety-four, but the age given in Ferdinando’s report was forty-four.

⁸⁰ Jean Fogo Russell, ‘Tarantism’, *Medical History*, 23 (1979), 404-25.

⁸¹ More, *ET*, p. 8.

⁸² More, *ET*, pp. 8-9. From Daniel Sennert [Daniele Sennerto], *Institutiones Medicinae: Libri Quinque* (Wittenberg: 1620), II.iii.ii.iv p. 394.

suspended through the use of narcotics. More reported della Porta's account of experimenting with an "intoxicating Potion" (that included toxic hallucinogens such as deadly nightshade and mandrake) in his youth. One of della Porta's comrades had eaten a lot of beef and "upon the taking the potion, [he] strongly imagined himself to be surrounded with bulls, that would be ever and anon running upon him with their horns."⁸³

7.5 Imagination and the Plastick Power of the Soul

Having established the extraordinary power of the imagination to dominate the mind and behaviour through delusions and hallucinations, More developed the argument that imagination could influence physical matter itself. The Spirit of Nature and the human soul were the immaterial organising principles, the plastic power of the soul being the mechanism—the "efformative might in the seed that shapes the body in its growth."⁸⁴ More conceived that whilst the perceptive faculty generally resided in the brain, the plastic faculty of the Soul was seated principally in the heart.⁸⁵ Strong emotion could therefore trigger the plastic power and cause physical changes to the body that resembled the idea that one was fixated upon. The passions were the "blind Instincts of Nature" which could be influenced by "that universal Plastic Principle, which by us is termed *the Spirit of Nature*".⁸⁶

More's cases demonstrated how this plastic power could cause physical effects from strong imagination. For example, the urine stains of those bitten by mad dogs would form into the shape of dogs. He reported how boys that dreamed of being grown up could transform overnight into men, and lovesick men developed bony structures within their hearts resembling the image of their loved ones.⁸⁷ More also referenced the legendary case of the Roman praetor, Genucius Cippus, [dates unknown as he

⁸³ More, *ET*, p. 9. From della Porta, *Magiae Naturalis* (1619), VIII.ii p. 311, [(1658), pp. 219-20]. More inaccurately referenced the source as "Magia natural. lib. 7. cap. 2." in *CSPW* (1662). Also from Sennert, *Institutiones Medicinae*, II.iii.ii.iv p. 394.

⁸⁴ More, *PP*, 'The Interpretation Generall', p. 431.

⁸⁵ More, *IS*, II.xv p. 270.

⁸⁶ More, *EE*, I.v p. 31 [(1690), I.vi p. 36].

⁸⁷ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 263. Probably from Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651) I.lxiv p. 143 & I.lxv p. 145 [(1993), pp. 201 & 204]. I have not yet identified the original source of the case of the bony heart.

may not have existed] who dreamed he had horns after watching a bull fight and awoke the next day with “a fair pair of horns”.⁸⁸

Most of More’s cases concerned the impact on the developing foetus of the imagination of the parents at the moment of conception, especially the mother. This was an ancient concept—even Jacob, the Biblical patriarch, displayed striped rods to Laban’s livestock whilst they were mating in order to produce more offspring that were striped and speckled, because any animals with such markings would become his own flock.⁸⁹ In particular, More reported a number of cases of foetal anomalies collected by Feyens, who considered that the power of imagination alone was sufficient to create the majority of these effects. More disagreed and argued that the soul of the mother ordinarily had no direct influence on the formation of the foetus, as was proved by eggs being successfully hatched far from the mother hen.⁹⁰ The generally accepted contemporary view of human development (based on Aristotle) was essentially epigenetic (the theory that embryos develop gradually into human shape rather than being preformed and simply growing larger) and ensoulment did not occur until after forty days from conception. More’s explanation was that the Spirit of Nature directed human development prior to ensoulment. Consequently, whilst Feyens considered diabolic intervention in extreme cases, More argued that all the “prodigious” effects evidenced by foetal anomalies occurred because “the deeply-impassioned fancy of the Mother snatches away *the Spirit of Nature* into consent”.⁹¹ The plastic power was already at work forming matter into the shape of a human baby, and thus was vulnerable to distortion by a strong emotional and

⁸⁸ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 263. Probably from Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651) I.lxiv p. 143 [(1993), p. 201] [More acknowledged Agrippa when he referred to this particular case again in *IS*, III.vi p. 389, who probably sourced it from Ovid, *Metamorphosis*, XV pp. 434-6].

⁸⁹ More, *PP (PS)*, p. 263. From *AKJV*, Genesis 30:31-43. More probably got the idea from Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651), I.lxv p. 145 [(1993), p. 204].

⁹⁰ E.g. “phantasia [...] nihil facit contra naturam inclinationem aut potentiam suam” [imagination ... it does nothing contrary to its natural inclination or power] in Thomas Feyens, [Thoma Fieno], *De viribus imaginationis* (London: Rogeri Danielis, 1657), XXII, pp. 310-2. More, *IS*, III.vi, p. 396. From Daniel Sennert [Daniele Sennerto], *Hypomnemata physica* (Frankfurt: 1636), ‘Hypomnematis IV - De Generatione viventium’, ix p. 268 and from Julius Caesar Scaliger, [Julii Caesaris Scaliger], *Exotericarum Exercitationum Liber XV, De Subtilitate ad Hieronymum Cardanum* (Paris: 1556), xxiii p. 46.

⁹¹ More, *IS*, III.vi-vii pp. 394-400; Feyens, *De viribus imaginationis*, XIII pp. 187-208. See also Jane Maienschein, ‘Epigenesis and Preformationism’ in Edward N. Zalta ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2017 Edition), [<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/epigenesis/> last accessed on 10th September 2017].

imaginative experience by the mother.⁹² He explained, “the *Soul of the World* interposes and insinuates into all generations of things, while the Matter is fluid and yielding. [...] it may be sometimes against their wills, as the unwieldiness of the Mothers Fancy forces upon her a Monstrous birth.”⁹³

More was confident of this explication because it was endorsed by physicians and philosophers—such as Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galen—and contemporary physicians “assent by daily experience”. The resulting signatures ranged from the frequent and simple, such as “the similitude of Cherries, Mulberries, the colour of Claret-wine spilt” (i.e. vascular birthmarks), to the rare and extraordinary, with variations in “colours, haire, and excrescencies [...] analogous to horns and hoofs” and even increases in the size and number of body parts.⁹⁴ More reported examples including foetuses and babies that resembled apes, pigs, dogs, bears, turkeys and frogs, after the mother had been looking at or contemplating those animals, and also white children born to black parents and vice versa after looking at pictures of Europeans and Africans respectively.⁹⁵

One example where the trigger event was at the point of conception was “the Hairy girle out of *Marcus Damascenus*”. A girl covered with hair (i.e. the rare genetic condition hypertrichosis) was presented as a novelty to King Charles of Bohemia [reigned 1346-1378, the future Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV] when he was near Pisa in Italy. The child’s mother was reportedly affected with religious horror concerning an image of St John the Baptist wearing a camel skin whilst at the crucial moment of conception.⁹⁶ In another case, an actor returned home to his wife one

⁹² More, *IS*, III.vi pp. 389-90.

⁹³ More, *IS*, III.vi p. 397.

⁹⁴ More, *IS*, III.vi pp. 390-1.

⁹⁵ More, *IS*, III.vi pp. 391-2 & III.xii p. 455. From Feyens, *De viribus imaginationis*, XXII, pp. 304-13. Many of the cases were repeated in More’s various sources, e.g. a case of an ape-like child and the white baby born to a Queen of Ethiopia are also in Digby, *Powder*, pp. 104, 108.

⁹⁶ More, *IS*, III.vi p. 391. From Feyens, *De viribus imaginationis*, XIII.v pp. 197-8. There are further details on the case in Agrippa, *Occult Philosophy* (1533, 1651), I.lxv pp. 145-6 [(1993), p. 204]; Ambroise Paré, *The workes of that famous chirurgion Ambrose Parey translated out of Latine and compared with the French by Th: Johnson* (London: Th: Cotes and R. Young, 1634), XXV.vii p. 978; and Digby, *Powder*, p. 104. See also M. A. Katritzky, “‘A wonderfull monster borne in Germany’: hairy girls in medieval and early modern German book, court and performance culture’, *German Life and Letters*, 67:4 (2014), 467-80, pp. 470-1. For Marcus Damascenus, see chapter three, p. 117 note 43 in this thesis.

night whilst still in his Devil costume and, after saying “he would beget a Devil on her, impregnated her with a Monster of a shape plainly diabolical.”⁹⁷

More reported the extraordinary case in which a father told his wife that she was carrying the Devil and that he would kill the baby. The baby was born with its upper half “spotted with black and red spots, with eyes in its forehead, a mouth like a *Satyre*, ears like a Dog, and bended horns on its head like a Goat.”⁹⁸ Another diabolical birth was reported in the West Indies, where the mother had “some fright [...] from the antick dances of the *Indians*, amongst whom the Devil himself does not fail to appear sometimes.” The baby was born with horns, hair, and various deformities such that “the whole shape was horrid and diabolical”.⁹⁹ Another baby was born with grey hair and eyebrows because the mother’s strong “fear of being surprized in the act of Adultery by her snowy-headed husband, made her imprint that colour on the Child she bore.”¹⁰⁰

Examples where the trigger point was nearing full term tended to be violently dramatic. More recounted a baby born with a bloody forehead wound after the father threatened to strike the mother in her forehead with a sword. Another child was born with “its face cloven in the upper jaw, the palate, and upper lip to the very nose” (i.e. cleft palate) after the mother saw a butcher cut a pig’s head in two with his cleaver.¹⁰¹ Similarly a woman, who saw a man’s hand severed in a quarrel in Mechelen (now in Belgium), “presently fell into labour, being struck with horror at the spectacle”; her baby was missing a hand and bled to death. Another woman in Antwerp (now in Belgium) saw a soldier in the street who had lost his right arm in battle and “fell presently into labour”, delivering a baby with one arm and one “bloody stump”. Lastly, another woman in Antwerp was watching a public execution when “she suddainly fell into labour, and brought forth a perfectly-formed

⁹⁷ More, *IS*, III.vii p. 399. From Feyens, *De viribus imaginationis*, XIII.viii p. 198. More inaccurately referenced the source as “Fienus de viribus Imaginat. quaest. 15. exempl. 9.” in *CSPW* (1662).

⁹⁸ More, *IS*, III.vii pp. 398-9. From Weyer, *De Praestigiis daemonum* (1583), IV.xviii pp. 455 [(1660), pp. 324-5; (1991), pp. 330-1).

⁹⁹ More, *IS*, III.vii p. 399. From Feyens, *De viribus imaginationis*, XIII.ix p. 199.

¹⁰⁰ More, *IS*, III.vii p. 404. From Athanasius Kircher, *Magnes sive de Magnetica Arte, Libri Tres* (Rome: 1654), III.vii.vii, pp. 569-70.

¹⁰¹ More, *IS*, III.vi p. 392. Probably from Feyens or Sennert, exact reference not identified.

infant, onely the head was wanting, but the neck bloody as their bodies she beheld that had their heads cut off.”¹⁰²

The Italian physician and philosopher, Fortunio Liceti [1577-1657] also supported the theory that the mother’s imagination could cause foetal deformities during pregnancy. Liceti was the source of More’s strange case of a woman from Sicily who gave birth to something that looked like a crab (Liceti uses the word ‘astacus’ meaning a lobster or crayfish) after seeing a fisherman catch an unusually large one.¹⁰³ Here again we can see examples of hindsight bias, where an effect is retrospectively linked with an appropriate causal event that is consistent with contemporary medical explanations.¹⁰⁴

The view that monstrous births were harbingers of divine retribution spread rapidly in the fifteenth century across the German and Italian states as a result of political tensions and military conflicts, continuing across Europe through the sixteenth century especially in the wake of the religious anxiety brought by the Reformation. It was thought the deformed babies often died soon after birth because their purpose—to deliver the providential message of imminent divine punishment for collective sin—was completed.¹⁰⁵ However, towards the end of the sixteenth century and early seventeenth century, moral judgement increasingly gave way to medical interpretations of causes. Physicians and natural philosophers discussed natural causes for the abnormalities including excess or defect of matter (e.g. dwarfs, conjoined twins), the mother’s imagination (e.g. hairy children) and balanced contributions from the parents (e.g. hermaphrodites).¹⁰⁶ For example, Liceti, English politician and philosopher Francis Bacon [1561-1626], and others considered that nature’s deviations were a wonder, demonstrating the artistry and beauty of nature’s

¹⁰² More, *IS*, III.vi pp. 392-3. From van Helmont, *Ortus Medicinae* (1652), 'Tractatus de Morbis', xiv, 'De Injectis Materialibus', p. 478 [(1664), 'A Treatise of Diseases', lxxx, 'Of Material things Injected or Cast into the Body', pp. 600-1].

¹⁰³ More, *IS*, III.vii, pp. 400-1. From Fortunio Liceti [Fortunius Licetus], *De monstrorum natura, causis et differentiis, Libri Duo* (Padua: 1616, 1634), II.lxvi p. 212.

¹⁰⁴ French & Stone, *Anomalistic Psychology*, pp. 139-40. See chapter four, p. 142 in this thesis.

¹⁰⁵ Lorraine Daston & Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 1998), pp. 180-9.

¹⁰⁶ Daston & Park, *Wonders*, pp. 189-92.

variety.¹⁰⁷ More did not make any aesthetic or providential judgements concerning these physiological anomalies, but simply selected the examples that he could use to support his theory of the Spirit of Nature.

Signs and signatures could be remarkable but more subtle than these extreme anomalies, for example in the form of birthmarks, such as one that resembled “*the Pope sitting on his Throne, with a Dragon under his feet, and an Angel putting a Crown on his head*”. More’s source, the German scholar Athanasius Kircher [1601/2-1680] considered it must have been caused by the man’s mother reflecting on an image of Pope Gregory XIII (who was commonly depicted in this way) whilst she was pregnant.¹⁰⁸ More also reported the case of a cherry mark on a baby that changed colour with the seasons from “green, pale, yellow, and red, at the times of year other Cherries are” through the universal pervasive force of the Spirit of Nature. More sourced the case from the Flemish chemist, physiologist, and physician Jan Baptist van Helmont [1580-1644] (the father of More’s future associate Francis Mercury van Helmont).¹⁰⁹ Van Helmont described how the “violence of desire” by the mother for cherries caused the infant’s “Flesh [to be] ennobled with the Properties and Power of the more inward or real Cherry, by the Conception of Imagination alone”. Van Helmont’s theory for this was “the force of the Microcosmical Spirit”, that contained “the Essences of all things, [...] hid in us”, which converted the idea of the cherry into “something like unto a Substance”.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Daston & Park, *Wonders*, pp. 200-1 & 291.

¹⁰⁸ More, *IS*, III.vii pp. 402-3. From Kircher, *De Magnetica Arte*, III.vii.vii pp. 568-9.

¹⁰⁹ More, *IS*, III.vii, p. 401. From van Helmont, *Ortus Medicinae*, 'Supplementum', xv, 'De Magnetica vulnerum curatione', p. 614, [(1664), 'A Treatise of Diseases', cxii, 'Of the Magnetick or Attractive Curing of Wounds', p. 785].

¹¹⁰ Van Helmont, *Ortus Medicinae*, 'Supplementum', xv, 'De Magnetica vulnerum curatione', p. 614 [(1664), 'A Treatise of Diseases', cxii, 'Of the Magnetick or Attractive curing of Wounds', p. 785]. Confusingly, elsewhere in the collected works, van Helmont rejected Paracelsus’s microcosm concept: “The name therefore of Microcosm or little World is Poetical, heathenish, and metaphorical, but not natural, or true. It is likewise a phantastical, hypochondriacal, and mad thing, to have brought all the properties, and species of the Universe into man.” Van Helmont, *Ortus Medicinae*, 'Supplementum', xlv, 'Scabies & Ulcera Scholarum', p. 260 [(1664), xli, 'Of the Scabs and Ulcers of the Schools', p. 323].

7.6 Healing and Sanative Contagion

The ability for one person to physically alter another person was not impossible in More's theological metaphysics and More reported two extraordinary cases of intentional healing by touch—known as 'stroking'—by Coker and Greatrakes. In 1656, More described how the "dead and uselesse" arm of a man was stroked (presumably by Coker) after which it recovered to "life and strength". More described the cure as "naturall" and proposed "a healing and sanative Contagion".¹¹¹ In reply to Anne Conway's enquiry in 1654, he ruled out diabolic and divine causes and ascribed the healing phenomenon, if the reports were true, to "a power partly natural and partly devotionall [...] that the blood and spiritts of this party [Coker] is become sanative and healing, by long temperance and devotion [...] and therefore he laying his hand upon diseased persons, his spiritts run out of his own body into the party diseased, and actuate and purify the blood and spiritts of the diseased party".¹¹² He later noted that Coker's melancholic disposition made this process risky, since he worried that his "blood and spirits were boyled to that height that it would hazard his brain, which proved true; for he was stark mad not very long after."¹¹³

Coker's fame was limited and short-lived, but Greatrakes's reputation spread from Ireland and he arrived in England in January 1666 at the Conways' invitation. It was common for people of all social standings to use a range of treatment options, especially if conventional physicians had not succeeded or could not be afforded.¹¹⁴ Greatrakes was unsuccessful in curing Anne Conway's chronic migraines but More met him at Ragley and reported that he cured a great range of conditions including cancer, deafness, epilepsy, leprosy, lameness, ulcers and the gout, all "attested by Physicians, Philosophers, and Divines of the most penetrating and accurate judgement". More described Greatrakes's healing power as "within the bounds of Nature [...] because he could only relieve or ease afflicted Nature, but not restore it when decaying." He then added a necessary quality of piety to "impute this gift of his curing diseases not to simple, but regenerate Nature". More's observations of

¹¹¹ More, *ET*, p. 57. Probably from Matthew Coker, *A short and plain narrative of Matthew Coker, [...] in reference to His Gift of Healing* (London: James Cottrel, 1654), p. 5.

¹¹² More to Conway, 7th June 1654, *Conway Letters*, p. 101. See also Coker, *Matthew Coker*.

¹¹³ More, *ET*, p. 57. See also More, *ET*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), 'Scholia', lviii p. 224 [(1712), p. 52].

¹¹⁴ Peter Elmer, *The Miraculous Conformist: Valentine Greatrakes, the Body Politic, and the Politics of Healing in Restoration Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 75- 8.

Greatrakes at Ragley confirmed his conjecture about “the accension of Blood and Spirits”, and he noted that Greatrakes’s sanguine and humane temperament protected him so that “his Brain was in no danger”.¹¹⁵ More observed that Greatrakes’s body, hand and urine had a “Herbous Aromatick Scent”, revealing that his own body also had a “sweet aromatick smell” and his “urine would smell like violets”.¹¹⁶ More did not elaborate but his implication was to highlight a connection between the purity of mind and body shared by himself and Greatrakes. Ward explained that More’s neo-platonic belief in divine purification and his Pythagorean ‘Philosophical Temperance’ had encouraged him to take care of his physical body: “the Dr. had always a great care to preserve His *Body* as a well-strung Instrument to His *Soul*, that so they might be *both* in Tune, and make due Musick and Harmony together.”¹¹⁷

More had noted the mixed outcomes of Greatrakes’s healing attempts. It was difficult, and indeed remains a challenge, to determine any genuine effects from faith-healing: diseases are usually time-limited and so any treatment sought at the nadir will naturally be followed by an improvement; conditions can be misdiagnosed; and the placebo effect (a beneficial effect resulting purely from belief in the efficacy of the treatment) is so significant that modern medical trials include double-blind trials with placebo control groups in order that neither the administering doctor nor patient knows whether they are receiving the drug or a placebo. Even the famous miracle healing site of Lourdes established a medical vetting committee in 1954.¹¹⁸

Although More considered that Coker and Greatrake’s healing powers were natural, they both claimed their healing abilities were divine gifts: Coker stated “all these things have I done by the Finger of God”, and Greatrakes described being given “an extraordinary Gift of God”.¹¹⁹ Their claims were similar to the thaumaturgic healing

¹¹⁵ More, *ET*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, lviii pp. 223-4 [(1712), pp. 51-3]. From Valentine Greatrakes, *A brief account of Mr. Valentine Greatraks, and divers of the strange cures by him lately performed written by himself in a letter addressed to the Honourable Robert Boyle, Esq.* (London: J. Starkey, 1666), passim.

¹¹⁶ More, *ET*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, lviii pp. 223-4 [(1712), pp. 51-2].

¹¹⁷ Ward, *Life* (1710), pp. 39-1.

¹¹⁸ Hines, *Pseudoscience*, x pp. 234-51. At Lourdes, there have been 70 recognised miracles from 7,000 alleged cures between 1858 and February 2018. See Sanctuary of Lourdes, *Miraculous Healings* [<https://www.lourdes-france.org/en/miraculous-healings/> last accessed 8th December 2018].

¹¹⁹ Elmer, *Miraculous Conformist*, p. 76. See also Coker, *Matthew Coker*, p. 6, and Greatrakes, *Valentine Greatraks*, p. 34.

role of the king—especially for the ‘king’s evil’ (scrofula)—that was regularly exercised by the Stuarts.¹²⁰ Whilst More added a couple of additional pages of Scholia in 1679 to include the case of Greatrakes, he never once mentioned the ‘royal touch’. This may have been because those touched by the king were only expected to improve, and to be completely cured was rare.¹²¹ I also wonder if More was uncomfortable with the ‘papist’ qualities of this miraculous intercessory royal role. Certainly when discussing Greatrakes’s successes, More was keen to stress they were not ‘miracles’ and emphasised the “ridiculous shams and cheats the Miracles of the *Roman Church*”.¹²²

7.7 Astrology and Talismans

Considering More’s belief in the providential causes of eclipses, comets and meteors as examined in chapter four, one might be forgiven for thinking he would also have been a believer in astrology, but he was in fact contemptuous of the whole concept. Judicial astrology was a commonplace belief across all levels of society; the royal court consulted astrologers and millions of almanacs were published in the seventeenth century. Astrology had featured in medical diagnostics and treatment since Hippocrates and Galen and was strengthened through the Renaissance interest in the occult into a specialist tool for some astrological physicians such as Napier.¹²³ However, More lambasted “the extreme folly and frivolousness of the pretended Art of Astrology”.¹²⁴

In common with many theologians, More objected to the predeterminism of astrology as incompatible with Christian free will. More insisted that people were “free Agents, and not fatal Actors”. He was outraged at the idea that the entire life of Jesus, including his miracles and his resurrection, were governed by “the *Influence* of

¹²⁰ Approximate figures per annum: James I, 870, Charles I, 2-3,000, Charles II, 4,000. Stephen Brogan, *The Royal Touch in Early Modern England: Politics, Medicine and Sin* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2015), pp. 1, 77, 85, 101.

¹²¹ Brogan, *Royal Touch*, p. 218.

¹²² More, *ET*, 3rd edition in *OO* (1679), ‘Scholia’, lviii pp. 223-4 [(1712), pp. 51-3]. For a wider discussion on the contemporary assessment of Greatrake’s ‘miracle’ cures, see Shaw, *Miracles*, pp. 74-97.

¹²³ Roy Porter, *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present* (London: Fontana Press, 1997, 1999), pp. 115-6, 173; MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, pp. 24-30; Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 341-379, especially p. 348.

¹²⁴ More, *GMG*, VII.xv p. 339.

the *Celestial Bodies*".¹²⁵ His views against astrology were more polarised than Plotinus, who, whilst denying direct causality on individuals, at least considered stars and planets could be used for divination.¹²⁶ More argued that the astrological houses, qualities and properties assigned to planets and stars at various phases and relative positions were "arbitrary", "without due *Experience* or *Reason*", and it was all simply "building Houses or Castles in the Air." He provided several refutations of various aspects of astrology using logic and his knowledge of astronomy and natural philosophy.¹²⁷

More mocked and rejected the claims for the utility of astrology in physic, husbandry and prognostic horoscopes that were endorsed by the English soldier and champion of judicial astrology, Sir Christopher Heydon [1561-1623].¹²⁸ In particular, More repeated the counter-argument concerning twins from clergyman and Oxford fellow, John Chamber [1546-1604]. Twins shared an identical astrological horoscope, yet could lead completely different lives. One case that More sourced from Chamber recounted a set of Scottish conjoined twins (thus born at exactly the same time) who lived to be twenty-eight, but often argued with each other and died at different times for different reasons.¹²⁹ Where predictions did appear to have come true, More attributed the outcome to chance, tricks or evil spirits. He thought that demons were responsible for the fulfilled predictions of the deaths of Cardan (Cardan did not actually die when he predicted he would) and the Roman astrologer, Ascleparion. In an attempt to nullify Ascleparion's prediction of his own demise torn apart by dogs, the Emperor Domitian ordered him to be killed and cremated, but the funeral pyre was overturned by a sudden storm and the body was attacked by a pack of dogs.¹³⁰

¹²⁵ More, *GMG*, VII.xiv pp. 334-5 & VII.xvii, pp. 359-60; Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 427-8.

¹²⁶ Plotinus, *Six Enneads*, 'The Third Ennead: First Tractate – Fate' & 'The Second Ennead: Third Tractate – Are the Stars Causes?'.

¹²⁷ More, *GMG*, VII.xiv-xvii, especially pp. 352, 346, 343, 359.

¹²⁸ More, *GMG*, VII.xiv-xvii, especially pp. 349, 357, 359.

¹²⁹ More, *GMG*, VII.xvii, p. 357. From Christopher Heydon, *A defence of judicial astrology* (Cambridge: John Legat, 1603), xi p. 257 and from John Chamber, *A treatise against judicial astrology* (London: John Harison, 1601), p. 53. See chapter three, p. 125 in this thesis.

¹³⁰ More, *GMG*, VII.xvii pp. 358-9. From Girolamo Cardano [Hieronymi Cardani], *De Propria Vita* (1643, reprint Amsterdam: 1654), x pp. 31-5 and from Suetonius, *De vita Caesarum*, 'The Life of Domitian', xv. See also Anthony Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer* (Cambridge MA & London: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 190.

More rejected astrological amulets and talismans as “superstitious foolery”, but acknowledged some effects were genuine, acting through the Spirit of Nature or demons. More referenced the Palladium of Troy (Diomedes and Odysseus had to sneak into the city and steal the Palladium—a wooden image of Pallas/Athena with protective powers that had fallen from heaven—before Troy could be captured by the Greeks),¹³¹ and also how a fifth-century CE Roman Governor, Valerius, dug up and removed talismanic statues from “*Thracia and Illyria*” (the Balkans) and “within a few daies after were overrun with the *Goths* and *Hunns*.”¹³² He noted that Apollonius of Tyana created talismans against “*Storks, Gnats, Inundations of Rivers, Winds and Storms* and other *noxious Things*”.¹³³

The French astrologer, Jacques Gaffarel [1601-1681], claimed that talismanic power was achieved through the natural power of signatures, but More disagreed and argued that any effects, if genuine, were “plainly beyond the power of any natural cause”.¹³⁴ He attributed the power of the biblical Brazen Serpent to the direct action of God.¹³⁵ Regarding talismans in general, More acknowledged the agent could be “*the Spirit of Nature [...] by reason of Similitude and Cognation*” (i.e. sympathy), just as identical twin brothers from Riez in France experienced the same ailments simultaneously.¹³⁶ Thus, a metal figure representing a gnat or scorpion would be of such a harsh similitude that it could, via “*the Spirit of Nature*”, “raise an harsh sense in those creatures, and therefore finding themselves in such a place in an displeasing temper, they will be sure to keep far enough from it.”¹³⁷

¹³¹ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv, p. 431. From John Gregory, *Notes and observations upon some passages of scripture* (Oxford: H. Hall, for Ed. Forrest Junior, 1646), p. 33; Virgil, *The Aeneid*, translated by John Dryden, (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1909), II & IX.

¹³² More, *GMG*, VIII.xv, p. 431. From Gregory, *Notes*, p. 33 [from Olympiodorus of Thebes, *History of the Western Empire*, (not extant)].

¹³³ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv p. 431. From Gregory, *Notes*, pp. 37-8 [from John Malalas [Joannes Malalas of Antioch], *Chronographia*, edited and translated by Ludwig Dinsdorf (Bonn: Impensis Ed. Weberi, 1831), X pp. 263-4]. This account is not in Philostratus’s *The Life of Apollonius*.

¹³⁴ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv, p. 430. From Jacques Gaffarel, *Unheard-of Curiosities concerning the Talismanical Sculpture of the Persians; the Horoscope of the Patriarkes; and the Reading of the Stars*, translated by Edmund Chilmead (London: G. D. for Humphrey Moseley, 1650), II.v pp. 96-144.

¹³⁵ See chapter four, pp. 133-4.

¹³⁶ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv, p. 432. From Gaffarel, *Curiosities*, II.vii p. 220.

¹³⁷ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv p. 432.

However, More reasoned that the power of most talismans was actually the result of “some ludicrous and deceitfull *Daemons* that love to befool Mankind”. One example that led him to this conclusion included a crocodile-shaped talisman that ceased to ward off crocodiles after a small part broke off.¹³⁸ Another was an account of the phallus-like talisman that either “*cured or diseased* the privy parts of the *Athenians*” depending on the due reverence paid to the associated deity (Bacchus/Dionysus).¹³⁹ An account of devastating fires in Paris after a fire talisman found under a bridge had been removed did not convince More of any natural power because, if genuine, it would have prevented citizens from lighting candles as much as preventing raging infernos.¹⁴⁰ There were also two cases of talismans that he argued had “no similitude at all with the things they are to keep off”. The first was a brass man on horseback to ward off plague in Constantinople, which suffered extraordinary “Plagues and fearful Mortalities” after the icon was destroyed.¹⁴¹ The second was a brass ship to ward off tempests. When a piece broke off the ship talisman, the sea became rough until the talisman was restored. Its power was tested by taking the talisman apart again “for experience sake” and the wind and sea “were suddenly rough and boisterous” until they put it back together again after which calm weather returned.¹⁴² More found much of the case evidence for talismans compelling, but he rejected the common astrological explanation in favour of a sympathetic connection through the Spirit of Nature, or demonic agency.¹⁴³

7.8 Summary Conclusion

In this chapter, I have evaluated More’s concepts of the Spirit of Nature and plastic power of the soul, placing his often neglected body of case material within the context of contemporary ideas. Greene dismissed More’s case studies, remarking that “More seems naturally attracted to the wildest type of superstitious tale”.¹⁴⁴ If we only examine the Hylarchic Principle in the context of Boyle’s air pump

¹³⁸ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv p. 432. Probably from Gregory, *Notes*, p. 39. The closest match I can find for this case is that of a crocodile talisman that ceased working after it was melted.

¹³⁹ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv p. 432. From Gregory, *Notes*, p. 175.

¹⁴⁰ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv pp. 432-3. From Gafferel, *Curiosities*, II.vi p. 153.

¹⁴¹ More, *GMG*, VIII.xv p. 433. From Gafferel, *Curiosities*, II.vi p. 165.

¹⁴² More, *GMG*, VIII.xv p. 433. From Gregory, *Notes*, pp. 39-40.

¹⁴³ For example, More, *AA*, 4th edition in *OO* (1679), III.ix ‘Scholia’ p. 122 [(1712), p. 169].

¹⁴⁴ Greene, ‘Spirit of Nature’, p. 460.

experiments, it *will* seem ridiculous and unnecessary because it has been taken out of its broader context. More needed to explain all activity in the world, especially for things that had no souls of their own, in order to defend his spiritual worldview from the rise of mechanism.

The Spirit of Nature not only helped More maintain his metaphysical dualism between inert matter and immaterial spirit that was responsible for all activity; it also explained why and how anomalies existed in God's perfectly created world. More described the Spirit of Nature as "a brute and insensate thing, as it were, devoid of all reason, counsel, and free will, and of such kind that can be easily deceived, and which can be precipitated into events against its general intention."¹⁴⁵ As Henry argues, More needed such explanations within his intellectualist and providentialist theology, whereas most seventeenth-century English natural philosophers, such as Boyle, found them to be superfluous because they adhered to a voluntarist theology allowing for God's arbitrary will.¹⁴⁶

More therefore strove to prove the reality and cogency of the Spirit of Nature through case studies that demonstrated a broad range of effects that could not be explained by mechanical theories. He argued that all the extraordinary phenomena of nature, such as magnetism, rainbows, tides, even the natural instincts of animals, could be explained by the Spirit of Nature. It was the agent for God's providential messages in the form of comets, blood rain and sun halos. It provided a non-magical and non-material explanation for sympathetic action at a distance such as weapon-salve. Together with the plastic power of the soul, the Spirit of Nature could modify the human form in response to an emotionally powerful imagination. Although More did not explicitly refer to this theory when assessing the healing powers of Coker and Greatrakes, it could also have been the agent for their 'sanative contagion'. Finally, More strongly objected to astrology as predestination, and proposed the Spirit of Nature and demonic mischief as alternative explanations for any genuine effects of predictions or talismans. More was not alone in his attempt to reconcile cases like

¹⁴⁵ More, *EM*, 2nd edition (1679), 'Scholia', xxviii', p. 329 [(1995), vol. 1, p.139].

¹⁴⁶ Henry, 'Spirit of Nature', pp. 55-76.

these with a workable system of the world and by exploring them we come closer to understanding the rich complexity of the early modern worldview.

Thus More argued that the principle of the Spirit of Nature was “forced upon me by inevitable evidence of Reason” as well as providing a defence of God and an immortal immaterial soul. More considered a purely mechanical universe with no God to be a “poore and precarious pretence”, and, even with the contributions of Hobbes and Descartes, he argued the mechanical philosophy fell short of being a complete and satisfactory natural philosophy. He was concerned that others might erroneously follow a mechanistic path if they did not know there was an alternative. In an expression of ominous foresight, he stated, “if the introduction of this [Spirit of Nature] Principle be not seasonable now, it will never be seasonable.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁷ More, *IS*, ‘The Preface’, sig. a3, b6-b7v.

8 Conclusion

This study set out to address a deficit in the historical literature concerning the extensive range of “miraculous and supernaturall effects” used by Henry More in a campaign to defend his concept of spirit from materialism and its perceived path to atheism. Many historians of More have struggled to reconcile their admiration for his philosophy with their embarrassment about his engagement with ideas and cases concerning the supernatural. Whilst there have been some general surveys of supernatural beliefs and experiences, such as those of Keith Thomas and Stuart Clark, most often the subject has been analysed on a piecemeal basis. Even the studies of More’s natural history of spirits by Rupert A. Hall, Allison Coudert and Robert Crocker have been brief and therefore restricted in range.¹

Belief in the supernatural is not a historical artefact of more superstitious eras, but an enduring phenomenon that is both existent and seriously studied today. Historians have a duty to examine new evidence that sheds light on old questions, and I have integrated some of the findings from anomalistic psychology into this study to help bridge the gap between realism and relativism. Human experience is a product of cognitive and perceptual processes filtered through cultural expectations. Whether the reported phenomenology in the cases of miraculous and supernatural effects were real or not, More was completely justified in seeking to understand and explain what was going on. Therefore this study of More’s cases of miraculous and supernatural phenomena not only reveals insights into More’s metaphysics, but also into the contemporary understanding of extraordinary beliefs and phenomenology.

More published dozens of works across his lifetime. The topics shifted with his personal interests and his reaction to the intellectual, scientific, political and religious environment around him. Whilst many historians have judged More to be a relic of a past age for his use of miraculous and supernatural case material in his campaign against atheism, few recognise that he was entirely a man of his age, embracing, even promoting, some of the new developments. More endorsed religious toleration but

¹ Hall, *Henry More*, pp. 128-45; Coudert, ‘Witchcraft’, pp. 115-36; Crocker, *Henry More*, pp. 127-42.

was also one of the first to undermine the credibility of religious radicals by linking enthusiasm to cases of delusion and religious melancholia.² As one of the group known retrospectively as the Cambridge Platonists, More was among the first to introduce the Neoplatonic concept of the Spirit of Nature into seventeenth century metaphysics.³ As rival systems of the world competed for acceptance, More was among the first to introduce the philosophy of Descartes to England, one of the few English philosophers to debate in writing with him, and one of the foremost writers arguing against the threat that mechanistic Cartesianism represented in the hands of atheistic materialists.⁴ In More's worldview, all force, direction, and activity of matter in the universe was to be seen in terms of spirit rather than "*meer Mechanical powers*" and all the associated phenomena, from planetary motion to the growth of plants, he cited as evidence of this "immediate instrument of God".⁵ As well as Hobbes, More also challenged Spinoza and became something of an authority against materialist philosophies in the Netherlands as well as England.⁶ After initially mocking experimentalism, More became an advocate (although a poor practitioner) of the new science, engaging with air pump experiments, and promoting Harvey's circulation of the blood. More's theories of divine infinite space may also have influenced Newton.⁷ More sought to disarm both atheists and religious radicals by attempting to render the apocalyptic prophecies comprehensible and accessible, stressing how they endorsed both natural and revealed religion and obedience to the political order.⁸ More's original natural theology made use of miraculous and supernatural effects and, although his method was not adopted by his fellow Cambridge Platonists or the Royal Society (whose neutrality on matters supernatural was in itself influential in changing attitudes), it was emulated by some later apologists such as Glanvill, Ray, Sinclair and Baxter.⁹

² Fouke, *Enthusiastical Concerns*, pp. 230, 234.

³ Hunter, Jr., 'Plastic Nature', p. 199; Greene, 'Spirit of Nature', p. 451.

⁴ Gabbey, 'Philosophia Cartesiana Triumphata', pp. 171-250.

⁵ More, *IS*, I.vii pp. 42-3, III.ix p. 426, III.xii pp. 450-8.

⁶ Colie, *Light and Enlightenment*, pp. 74-116.

⁷ Henry, 'Gravity', p. 95; Reid, 'Divine Absolute Space', pp. 79-102.

⁸ Hutton, 'Apocalypse', pp. 131-40.

⁹ Powicke, *Cambridge Platonists*, p. 159; Hunter, 'Royal Society and the Decline of Magic', pp. 105-8; McAdoo, *Anglicanism*, pp. 108-11; Henry, 'Materialism', p. 172, note 2.

This thorough examination of More's works has identified 763 cases of miraculous and supernatural effects across more than twenty of his works. A bottom-up analysis of those cases yielded four major clusters that I think More himself would fully recognise: miracles, providence and prophecy; independence and immortality of the incorporeal soul; the nature and powers of angels, demons and witches; and, the Spirit of Nature and Plastic Power of the Soul. In evaluating his methodology, I explained his use of criteria and his confirmation bias in his approach to evidence i.e. a reliance on credible testimonies from reliable authorities of knowledge (such as philosophers, demonologists and physicians) and eyewitnesses, rather than on empirically derived matters of fact. My analysis also revealed that the majority of the cases were referenced and that his accuracy of reportage was extremely high. I have also explained his additions and excisions of case material. In terms of sources and geographic regions, these reflected More's cases, with biblical Middle Eastern and early modern European cases predominant. By undertaking this systematic catalogue and analysis of the cases and their sources, some important features of More's methodology have been identified for the first time. For example, it was not just More's natural theological and philosophical works, but also his theological works that used miraculous and supernatural case material, which indicates that this was a general feature of More's methodological style. In fact, the *Grand Mystery of Godliness* contains more cases than any other single work by More. Although More is notorious for reporting witch and ghost stories, the statistical analysis demonstrates that he actually reported more cases of miracles, providence and prophecy than any other theme.¹⁰ It may be that the focus on witchcraft by those historians that have examined More's supernatural interests, i.e. Hall, Crocker or Coudert, has contributed to this inaccurate impression.

As an Anglican apologist, it was fundamentally important to More to defend the Old and New Testament miracles, as they were the clearest demonstrations of the existence of God. Also, he had to account for contemporary reports of divine providence and at the same time discredit the miracle claims of the rival religions of Catholics and Muslims and of the Radicals. His purpose in using cases of miracles and providence was most frequently to offer precedents for the events described in

¹⁰ See chapter three, pp. 103-7.

apocalyptic prophecy and thus to persuade sceptics that God was willing and capable of such wrath and destruction of his own creation. In objective reality comets, eclipses, earthquakes and other disasters occur naturally, but without the benefit of modern scientific technology and explanations, the availability heuristic, combined with hindsight bias and a poor understanding of randomness makes one prone to attribute a supernatural cause.¹¹ More's theological works were intended to defend some of the more obtuse sections of the Bible, especially apocalyptic revelation, to prevent them being twisted for use by enthusiasts or ridiculed by atheists. It is noteworthy that many miracles, prophecies and providential prodigies have similarities with modern hallucinations and lucid dream experiences.¹² In his defence of 'genuine' miracles from attacks from sceptics such as Hobbes, who had pointed out that Pharaoh's magicians had replicated the 'miracles' of Moses, More compared the supernatural effects of Jesus to Apollonius. However, his argument for the miracles of one being divine and the other trickery or demonic magic was weak and inconsistent, and distilled down to the distinguishing characteristic of moral purpose. His explanations for why the miracles of Catholic saints and Muhammad were false were primarily based on their ridiculous nature, and he was oblivious to his confirmation bias in that. More struggled to rationalise his definition of divine phenomena because his confirmation bias was ultimately the judge of whether a miracle was genuine or false. More's arguments were effectively circular – the best evidence for God was miracles, and miracles were phenomena performed by God. Conformity and cognitive dissonance resolution are known psychological processes underlying the growth and maintenance of religious belief.¹³ Since More's time, the growth of science and the development of tolerant and liberal humanist ethics have proved hard for modern Christians to reconcile with biblical literalism, leading to fluid rather than fixed interpretations, for example in areas such as creation or in relation to some of the more intolerant and unpleasant biblical rules and stories.¹⁴

More was concerned that materialism was an inevitable path to atheism and so he steadfastly defended his concept of incorporeal spirit that was independent of—yet

¹¹ See chapter four, p. 142.

¹² See chapter four, pp. 148 & 151.

¹³ See chapter four, pp. 135, 154, 157-9.

¹⁴ Edward J. Larson & Larry Witham, 'Scientists are still keeping the faith', *Nature*, 386:6624 (1997), 435-6; Dawkins, *God Delusion*, pp. 268-97.

could interact with—matter, against the counterarguments of Hobbes and Descartes. He further argued that this incorporeal spirit was the substance of human souls that pre-existed and survived the mortal body, and that the disembodied soul retained the faculties of memory, sensation and perception and could interact with the living. These were principles he considered fundamental to the service of Christianity in order to explain God, the Resurrection at the Day of Judgement, the afterlife, angels and demons—although his views on soul vehicles, the pre-existence of the soul and the Resurrection were controversial. More evidenced his theories with cases of seers and witches, who reported their souls travelling outside their bodies—much like modern day reports of Out-of-Body Experiences.¹⁵ Ghost stories reinforced More's argument for the immortal and independent soul. Through analysing the cases themselves, the factors of essential importance to cultures across time and geography, such as justice and love, can be found reflected in the ghost narratives.¹⁶ Modern cross-cultural psychological studies of sleep paralysis have revealed consistent experiential symptoms and a variety of similar supernatural associations across cultures.¹⁷ There were also some striking differences, such as the revenants of Eastern Europe whose folkloric proto-vampire characteristics were much more substantial and monstrous than warranted by More's pneumatology (and refused to fit neatly into it), being alien concepts to contemporaries in Western Europe.¹⁸

As well as ghosts, More argued that the miraculous and supernatural effects of angels, demons and witches were only possible if spirit and its properties (immaterial, immortal, self-active, indiscernible, penetrable and extended) together with soul vehicles and their properties (sight, hearing, touch, cognition and memory) were as More had advocated. Witchcraft has received great attention from historians and anthropologists who together have built up quite a sophisticated understanding of the socio-dynamic processes underlying the beliefs, accusations and confessions. This success can be taken further by recognising the possible role of personal psychological elements such as brief psychotic disorder, dissociative identity disorder, lycanthropy, sleep paralysis, hallucinations, and cognitive factors, such as

¹⁵ See chapter five, pp. 165-70.

¹⁶ See chapter five, pp. 172-88.

¹⁷ See chapter five, pp. 184-5.

¹⁸ See chapter five, pp. 182-8.

the availability heuristic presenting common cultural explanations foremost for extraordinary experiences.¹⁹ More seems to have been utterly disinterested in the human side of witchcraft. His interest was purely in the intellectual application of his metaphysics to explaining the diverse phenomena of angels, demons, haunted houses and witchcraft. However, More presented a series of alternative yet non-falsifiable hypotheses to account for the same supernatural effect, such as physical bodily transformations, spirit vehicles, and demonic illusions. Permitting all these options means that, if one was found wanting, then another would be substituted until, as with demonic illusions, one cannot trust the evidence of one's own senses—thus rendering all theorising redundant.²⁰

More's concept of the Spirit of Nature was the ultimate 'black box' theory to account for all phenomena that could not be explained by miracles, human souls, angels, demons or witchcraft. It was a Christianised, non-rational incorporeal spirit—adapted from the Platonic *anima mundi*, soul of the world—that accounted for both regular and irregular physical phenomena from gravity to providential effects such as comets and apparitions, through an interaction between immaterial spirit and inert matter. This avoided invoking a sentient animistic Nature, or endowing matter with movement and thus reducing these effects to mere mechanical clockwork. The Spirit of Nature was the agent that guided the natural instinctive behaviour of animals, especially soulless creatures born of putrefaction, and kept that behaviour consistent across continents.²¹ It was More's explanation for the power of sympathy, all-consuming delusions and foetal anomalies through the plastic power of the soul.²² Hindsight bias is a modern explanation for this inappropriate coupling of cause (emotional experience) and effect (birthmarks and prodigies). I have suggested that More's Spirit of Nature may have been the process underlying his theory of "the healing and sanative Contagion" of Greatrakes.²³ It is worth noting that More rejected astrology as a kind of predestination and he argued vigorously against it using theology, logic, astronomy and case studies. More was sceptical of talismans,

¹⁹ See chapter four, pp. 142, 148; chapter five, pp. 184-5; and chapter six, pp. 201, 206-7, 212-3.

²⁰ See chapter six, pp. 211-4, 220.

²¹ See chapter seven, pp. 222-9.

²² See chapter seven, pp. 229-41.

²³ See chapter seven, pp. 242-4, 248. See also More, *ET*, p. 57. See Coker, *Matthew Coker*, p. 5. Hines, *Pseudoscience*, pp. 234-51.

but he accepted that the Spirit of Nature and demons could be responsible for causing any genuine effects.²⁴ More controversially extended the Spirit of Nature to cover the new discoveries concerning the properties of air and vacuums. It was closely related to the plastic power of the soul, which through strength of emotion could overpower the senses, physically alter its own terrestrial body, and, through the Spirit of Nature, could even alter another physical body. For More, the Spirit of Nature was an essential component of his dualist metaphysics, keeping the properties of spirit and matter distinct, but providing a mechanism for them to interact. Without it, materialist philosophers might explain the entire universe without any need for spirit or God; thus from More's perspective the Spirit of Nature was "forced upon me by inevitable evidence of Reason" as well as a defence of God and an immortal immaterial soul.²⁵

In trying to understand the depth of More's conviction in these accounts of miraculous and supernatural effects, one underlying reason cries out for attention—that More had experienced something "peculiar" himself. In his works, More hinted that, "I have been no carelesse Inquirer into these things, and from my childhood to this very day, have had more reasons to believe the Existence of God and a Divine Providence, then is reasonable for mee to make particular profession of."²⁶ More wrote about his guiding principle of "*Divine Sagacity*" and his biographer, Ward, reported that More "*several times receiv'd some extraordinary Hints or Items in his writing; chiefly with respect to Matters of Prudence, and when he saw (as he said) afterwards, that the Way he was going, would have led him into an Angiportus [blind-alley].*"²⁷ Ward noted More strove to maintain the "*Divine Body*" as a necessary part of the "*Divine Life*" and ensured that his physical body would be in harmony "as a well-strung Instrument to His *Soul*".²⁸ More's body, and even his urine, supposedly smelled unusually sweet.²⁹ More also wrote honestly about his providential dream of the chastising old bearded man, of the inspirational dream of

²⁴ See chapter seven, pp. 244-7.

²⁵ More, *IS*, 'The Preface', sig. b6.

²⁶ More, *AA*, 'The Preface', sig. B3.

²⁷ More, *CSPW* (1662), 'The Preface General', pp. vii-viii; Ward, *Life*, p. 130.

²⁸ Ward, *Life*, pp. 39-1.

²⁹ See chapter seven, p. 243.

the angels and the trumpet, his apocalyptic vision of the seven thunders, and his nightmare of the eagle-boy-bee analogy for the Kabbalah.³⁰

In addition to these almost ‘mystical’ experiences, Ward made further interesting revelations in More’s biography that he described as “*Peculiar of another sort that were found in him*” that have not received much scholarly attention.³¹ Ward described a couple of curious but clearly profound experiences that More had related to him. The first was from More’s childhood, and whilst it probably had a mundane explanation, seemed to him to be a miraculous and supernatural experience: “*that lying one Moon-shining Night in the Cradle awake, he was taken up thence by a Matron-like Person, with a large Roman Nose, saluted and deposited there again. The Impression was ever Extraordinary; and so perhaps he thought not himself mistaken in his Sense of it.*”³² The second experience was a type of providential warning or premonition. “As he was going once to a Gentleman’s House (a Friend of his) he *felt* all on a sudden an unaccountable *Check*, or *Motion* within himself, forbidding him to go. He stood a while and consider’d: But being Conscious to himself of no just Hindrance, he went forwards; but had not been long enter’d into the House, when it was all on Fire, and very soon burnt.”³³ It seems that More considered he was blessed with providential guidance in his thoughts, his writing, his body and his experiences and even described himself as having “a Natural touch of *Enthusiasme*”. In Ward’s opinion, More was the recipient of “some *Special Favours* and *extra-ordinary Communications*”, by which he meant a good guardian genius like the one Bodin had reported. “For though the *Spirit of Prophecy* be in one sense *ceas’d*; yet God hath not hereby precluded his *own* Power, nor yet that of his *Ministring Spirits*, from *Visiting* and *Assisting* of his Servants, as he pleaseth.”³⁴ Modern psychological research has proved that existing religious beliefs and personal subjective paranormal experiences are the most common reasons given for belief in the paranormal and supernatural.³⁵ Thus More was predisposed to believe

³⁰ See chapter four, pp. 150-2.

³¹ Ward, *Life*, p. 125.

³² Ward, *Life*, pp. 134-5.

³³ Ward, *Life*, p. 129.

³⁴ Ward, *Life*, pp. 43, 126, 131-2. See More, AA, III.x pp. 140-4 [(1655+), III.xiii]. From Bodin, *Demon-Mania* (2001), I.ii pp. 59-62 [(1581), pp. 10v-13].

³⁵ See for example: Susan J. Blackmore, ‘A Postal Survey of OBEs and Other Experiences’, *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 52:796 (1984), 225-244, especially ‘Table 10 Psychic

more readily in the miraculous and supernatural effects reported by others, because he was already convinced of their reality by his own prior experiences. This study also shows, through its examination of More's broad range of miraculous and supernatural phenomena—most of which he accepted, some he was ambivalent about, and some he outright rejected—that his belief in the supernatural was complex and multi-faceted. This is consistent with modern studies of supernatural and paranormal belief that are unable to set out a 'one-size-fits-all' definition, and have developed paranormal belief questionnaires with up to seven subscales to identify the different dimensions of supernatural belief.³⁶

More's ghost and witchcraft cases have attracted criticism from many historians, accusing him of superstitious credulity. Such a judgement is both true and false depending on one's perspective. Objectively, an argument can be made from a modern day science-educated retrospective viewpoint that More's collection of supernatural anecdotes proved nothing and demonstrate a paucity of critical thinking. However, that judgement is anachronistic, over-simplified and unsophisticated. More's method of citing authoritative sources was the accepted traditional form of knowledge—the new experimental science was only just establishing itself in his lifetime and his attempts to incorporate its findings into his work met with resistance. More's beliefs in ghosts and witches were consistent with the majority of his contemporaries and the statute book, and entirely consonant with his religious and metaphysical framework. More established a set of criteria for judging the validity of cases and he modified which cases he included accordingly. More accepted biblical miracles without question, but expressed scepticism for the miracles attributed to Catholic saints, relics and sacraments, the miracles attributed to the Islamic Prophet Muhammad, and the destiny-guiding properties of celestial bodies divined through astrology. Therefore More's case selection was less the result of superstitious credulity and much more a reflection of his confirmation bias. He rejected and ridiculed the miracles of other faiths simply because they were not his own, even when they were very similar in content to the biblical miracles that he

Experiences and Beliefs' p. 239; Joseph Glicksohn, 'Belief in the Paranormal and Subjective Paranormal Experience', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 11:7 (1990), 675-683; Dave Clarke, 'Experience and other reasons given for Belief and Disbelief in Paranormal and Religious Phenomena', *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research*, 60 (1995), 371-84.

³⁶ French & Stone, *Anomalistic Psychology*, pp. 7-14.

championed. This demonstrates that although he presented evidence in support of his conclusions, More's methodology was not truly 'scientific' in the modern sense. His biases from his prior beliefs made it difficult for him to be truly objective and impartial and accordingly his evidence and conclusions always served to confirm rather than disprove his hypotheses. The interdisciplinary approach adopted here of thorough historical analysis of the miraculous and supernatural effects in More's works, aided by the knowledge from the psychology of religion and anomalous experiences, has done much to explain how such an intelligent and knowledgeable philosopher as More could both uncritically accept and dismissively reject cases that appear, to a modern objective observer, to be fundamentally the same.

Crocker argues that "Experiment, or proofs from Nature, were for More always subsidiary 'signa' of rational metaphysical arguments."³⁷ Subsidiary, yes, but I would argue nonetheless *necessary* for More to make his argument robust in the emerging culture of an evidence-based new science, and that is why the miraculous and supernatural effects appeared in so many of his most important works. In conclusion, I would like to leave More a last opportunity to justify his methodology:

"I do not here appeal to the Complexional humours or peculiar Relishes of men, that arise out of the temper of the *body*, but to the known & unalterable *Idea's* of the *mind*, to the *Phaenomena* of *Nature* and Records of *History*. Upon the last whereof if I have something more fully insisted, it is not to be imputed to any vain Credulity of mine, or that I take a pleasure in telling strange stories, but that I thought fit to fortify and strengthen the Faith of others as much as I could; being well assured that a contemptuous misbelief of such like Narrations concerning *Spirits*, and an endeavour of making them all ridiculous and incredible, is a dangerous Prelude to *Atheisme* it self, or else a more close and crafty Profession or Insinuation of it. For assuredly that Saying was nothing so true in Politicks, *No Bishop, no King*; as this is in Metaphysicks, *No Spirit, no God*."³⁸

³⁷ Crocker, 'Biographical Essay', p. 4.

³⁸ More, AA, III.xiii, p. 164 [(1655+), III.xvi].

Appendix 1: Portrait of Henry More



Figure 1

Engraving of Henry More by William Faithorne (1675)

Reference Collection NPG D22865 © National Portrait Gallery, London

Appendix 2: Collected Works of Henry More

This table shows the editions of the major works published in each of the collected works.

	1662	1679	1712	1675	1700	1708
Edition of Major Work ¹	CSPW (English)	OO (Latin)	CSPW (English)	OT (Latin)	OT (Latin)	<i>The Theological Works of the most Pious and Learned Henry More, D. D. (English)</i>
<i>EE</i>		3 rd				
<i>EM</i>		2 nd				
<i>DD-123</i>		2 nd				
<i>AA</i>	3 rd	4 th	4 th			
<i>ET</i>	2 nd	3 rd				
<i>Henrici Mori Cantabrigiensis Epistolae Quatuor ad Renatum Descartes & Epistola H. Mori ad VC</i> ²	1 st	2 nd	2 nd			
<i>IS</i>	2 nd	3 rd	3 rd			
<i>CC</i>	2 nd	3 rd	3 rd ³			
<i>DD-45</i>		2 nd				
<i>GMG</i>				1 st	1 st	1 st
<i>ME-MI</i>				1 st	1 st	1 st
<i>ME-SP</i>				1 st	1 st	1 st
<i>ESESC</i>				1 st	1 st	1 st
<i>AI</i>				1 st	1 st	1 st
<i>AAI</i>				1 st	1 st	1 st
<i>DH</i>				1 st	1 st	1 st

¹ Various other brief works were also included in the collected works

² In Latin only.

³ Scholia not translated into English from Latin.

Bibliography

Notes on the Text

Quotations are given in the original spelling with the exception of normalising the following early modern characters:

i = j

vv = w

v = u

u = v

ſ = s

For ease of reference, I have given book and chapter references for More because of the different structures in each edition. Where useful, I have also provided this for some other sources.

Manuscript Sources

Hartlib Papers

Letter, Henry More To ?, 27 November 1648, Ref 18/1/1A (University of Sheffield, 2008)

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